PR
881
.C75
1966

Cross, Wilbur Lucius

Four contemporary novelists

DATE DUE

COLLEGE OF MARIN LIBRARY
COLLEGE AVENUE
KENTFIELD, CA 94904

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2020 with funding from
Kahle/Austin Foundation

https://archive.org/details/fourcontemporary0000cros_h9x6

# FOUR CONTEMPORARY NOVELISTS

# FOUR CONTEMPORARY NOVELISTS

BY

WILBUR L. CROSS

*Essay Index Reprint Series*

BOOKS FOR LIBRARIES PRESS
FREEPORT, NEW YORK

First Published 1930
Reprinted 1966
Second Reprinting 1971

INTERNATIONAL STANDARD BOOK NUMBER:
0-8369-0353-6

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOG CARD NUMBER:
67-22087

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

# CONTENTS


| CHAPTER | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| I. | INTRODUCTION | 3 |
| II. | JOSEPH CONRAD | 9 |
| III. | ARNOLD BENNETT | 63 |
| IV. | JOHN GALSWORTHY | 101 |
| V. | HERBERT GEORGE WELLS | 157 |
| VI. | READING LIST | 197 |

# INTRODUCTION

# I

## INTRODUCTION

"The Development of the English Novel," which was first published in 1899, closed with Kipling, who in a succession of short stories had spread before the eyes of the Western world the panorama of civil and military India, with the natives in the background, and had brought home to Englishmen the consciousness of Empire. Kipling was yet to write "Kim," where he turned into the Great Road of Hind, which the Lama and his *chela* were to tramp, all castes and conditions of men. "Brahmins and chumars, bankers and tinkers, barbers and bunnyas, pilgrims and potters—all the world going and coming." Here in this "River of Life" was Mother India.

Nor had Samuel Butler's "Way of All Flesh," though written many years before, been given to the public yet. With this cold,

highly intellectualized novel the new fiction definitely broke with the Victorian era. Human nature seemed to have suddenly changed. Filial affection for the first time became an illusion. In the 'nineties, Henry James where I left him was in the second stage of his art. He had but recently passed from the clear objectivity of his first manner into impressionism, where the lines of plot and character were more or less blurred so that the reader had to guess at conclusions. He was on the way to his third and last manner, which was, as may be seen in "The Awkward Age," to transfer a dramatic action from outer incident to the minds of his characters. Never before had the psychological novel gone so far.

Not yet had Conrad, Wells, Bennett, and Galsworthy done more than try their hand at fiction in this or that way. Edith Wharton was experimenting with the short story. "The Age of Innocence" was twenty years ahead. Far off, too, were Willa Cather and Sinclair Lewis, with "My Antonía" and "Death Comes for the Archbishop," and "Main Street" and

"Babbitt" and "Arrowsmith." It has been a prolific age since Hardy shocked the Victorians with "Jude the Obscure." And now what was but a short time ago a new age is also passing. Rebecca West, whose best novel is still "The Judge," has called Wells, Bennett, and Galsworthy "the uncles"; and of Conrad, Rose Macaulay remarks that his ship is sinking below the horizon. E. M. Forster has depicted an India other than Kipling's. Virginia Woolf has refined upon Henry James. Aldous Huxley has outdone Butler in malicious satire. Ernest Hemingway has exceeded his predecessors in realistic frankness. And Thornton Wilder has revived the biographical legend in "The Bridge of San Luis Rey" and "The Woman of Andros." These are a few in the multitude of men and women who have made the contemporary novel what it is. Other names may be found in the Reading List appended to this volume.

For rather extended exposition here, as supplementary to "The Development of the English Novel," I have selected four novelists who

belong to the elder generation, omitting for the present the Americans. With the exception of Conrad, who is already dead, they were all born in the 'sixties of the last century. The essays devoted to them have appeared in abbreviated form at various times in *The Yale Review*. "Had I only written 'Waverley,'" Sir Walter Scott remarked, "I should long since have been, according to the established phrase, 'the ingenious author of a novel much admired at the time.'" So, as he told Dr. Dryasdust, he must go on with a novel once a year. Conrad, Bennett, Wells, and Galsworthy with their many novels are in the English tradition of Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot, and Hardy, all of whom according to their light, depicted in a large way the times in which they lived. Not all the aspects of contemporary civilization appear in the novelists considered in this volume. But in no other group of writers, whether poets, essayists, or novelists, is there so much. Largeness or amplitude is their characteristic. As Dryden said of Chaucer, "here is God's plenty."

# JOSEPH CONRAD

## II

## JOSEPH CONRAD

THE Victorian era was drawing to an end when an unknown man of alien blood entered the domain of English fiction and not long after won honors there equal to any held by his contemporaries who had been born into the language. Conrad's name when written out in Polish was Teodor Josef Konrad Korzeniowski. What he thought a curious public was entitled to know about a life over which hung the shadow of mystery he disclosed in "The Mirror of the Sea," "A Personal Record," and elsewhere. What at last he wished to say of the novels he had written, he put into little essays prefixed to the volumes of a uniform edition of the Works which his publishers brought out a few years before his death. Since then Mrs. Conrad and several friends (Edward Garnett, best of all) have

written intimately of his personal characteristics; and G. Jean-Aubry has edited a collection of his letters with a long biographical sketch containing many new facts and rectifying a hitherto inexact chronology. Though the enquiry concerning Conrad will still go on with the publication of more letters, the account in all essentials has been closed. Conrad has written his books and he has died.

And now, what of the man and the novels he left behind? Ben Jonson said in antique verses that he who looked upon the Droeshout portrait of Shakespeare would see a face, but if anyone wished to see the man he must look into the book of plays. So Conrad sometimes wrote of the art he practised. A novelist, he reiterated, creates a world of the imagination out of his experiences as colored by his temperament, which, though resembling the worlds of other minds, can never have quite the same perspective and so is always fated to be "a little mysterious" to his readers. His particular world is necessarily an expression of his own personality through incident and

character. Therein are his thoughts and emotions, his moods and dreams, his sense of the meaning of things, and what in old style is called a conscience—that heirloom, said Conrad, of the race and the family, "fashioned by the words, the looks, the acts, and even by the silences and abstentions surrounding one's childhood."

Enough is known of Conrad's childhood and youth to give one a glimpse here and there of his mentality as it was unfolding. He came of a family of Polish landowners who had lost most of their estates during and after the Napoleonic wars. His father, a patriot and literary dilettante, was exiled by the Russian government for the part he took in secret meetings preliminary to an uprising at Warsaw. Mother and child accompanied the exile into various Russian prison camps, where they all underwent many privations and some cruelties. The mother, a woman of beauty and culture, quickly succumbed when her child was in his eighth year; and his father, though permitted to return to Poland after becoming so

broken in health as to be no longer feared, died at Cracow five years later in most distressing circumstances. The orphan was taken over by an uncle and other relatives, who gave him a tutor to direct his studies and to travel about with him.

Often the boy fell ill while with his parents in exile, and once he came near death. He had no playmates. About him he saw no happiness, no contentment. The men and women who did not die always had the fear of death before them. His nervous system received shock after shock; and when he watched "the awful stillness of the sick-room" where his father lay dying, he thought he would go crazy. He picked up a book and began to read. That saved him. The long and terrible ordeal through which he passed developed in him, however, qualities that are usually described as moral. If life as he observed it meant endurance, quiet or exasperated, it was endurance for ideals in the pursuit of which hope might fade but faith was not lost. Whatever might happen, honor and loyalty, truth

and sincerity, remained as abstract virtues at least. Withal there was awakened in him compassion for men who must suffer. From these qualities and ideas brought over from childhood Conrad's mind never swerved.

As an escape from fear and desolation the boy turned, as when his father died, to books, of which the family had a good collection. Conrad could not recall the time when he was unable to read. All he remembered was that at the age of five he was reading in every Polish book that he could lay hands on. The next year he was reading and speaking French also. Thereafter verse, romance, history, and travel in both languages carried him in imagination away from the dismal scenes of which he was a part. "Don Quixote" held him like a spell, not by its humor, on which he was silent, but by the charm of that imaginary world through which the Gentleman of La Mancha rode with a halo round his head, oblivious of the world of ordinary mankind in which he was to meet disaster. Here for the first time Conrad was made dimly aware of those realms of illusion

which all minds are destined to enter and leave disenchanted at last. This aspect of human life, which appears in all the novels written in his maturity, took a firm hold upon his imagination during the period when he was passing from childhood to youth. The idealism of his father and mother had led them along a straight path to exile and death. Nor could he ever forget the story told him of a grand-uncle who, "in pursuit of a great illusion," joined Napoleon in the invasion of Russia, and on the retreat from Moscow barely escaped starvation. And did not the great Napoleon himself, whom the boy hated and admired, have a chance to meditate over a vanished illusion while a British man-of-war was conveying him to St. Helena?

Books of travel into all lands and seas were the boy's passion. His whole being was stirred by tales of the great explorers and navigators who had laid open to view the vast spaces of the earth. The voyages of Tasman, Captain Cook, Sir John Franklin, and a score of others, he traced out on old maps, observing at

the same time how they all dressed, looked, and behaved, and making up his mind whether they were gentlemen or rogues. His particular hero was Livingstone. A mere map of Central Africa splashed with white to indicate unexplored regions, so thrilled him that one day he put his finger on one of the white spots and told his schoolmates that he would go there some day. They laughed at him, but he kept his word and wrote "Heart of Darkness" after a journey through the Congo. Thus in childhood and youth, Conrad's imagination was peopled, not so much with the characters of famous fiction, though they were there, as with the old sea-dogs and adventurers that gave their lives to exploration on land and water.

He was midway in his sixteenth year when he first caught sight of the sea as he stood with his tutor on the Lido at Venice. In that one look over the Adriatic was settled the question of a career. He would go to sea, which for him symbolized that freedom towards which he was being driven by an irresistible impulse.

The desert would have done as well if he had first seen the Sahara. "Travel," to quote an Arabic proverb after him, "is victory." In this instance it was victory over the destiny foreshadowed for a boy born of an inland people. He took, in his own words, "a standing jump out of his racial surroundings and associations" into a life having no relation to anything that had gone before outside of dreams.

Preparations for entering the French service at Marseilles moved rapidly and by Christmas of the next year he found himself in an old pilot ship "running before a Gulf of Lyons gale." Then followed three wild years on the Mediterranean with voyages out, during which he fought a duel and engaged for a time in illicit traffic with Don Carlos, the Spanish Pretender. The end came when in order to escape capture his little craft was driven against the rocks on the Spanish coast. Not long after he transferred to the British Merchant Service, where as officer and commander of small wooden vessels, rarely above two thousand tons burden, he traversed the

seas of the British Empire. For twenty years altogether he lived mostly with the sea, or her harbors, estuaries, and rivers. When he set forth he sometimes thought of himself as another Ulysses, leaving "the enchanting inland sea of classic adventure" and sailing through the Pillars of Hercules "out into the promise of world-wide oceans." Early voyages took him to the West Indies, the Gulf of Mexico, and South America. And then, as described in "Youth," he had his first vision of the East. His ship had gone down in fire, and he sat exhausted in the cockle shell that had saved him. It was at night by an island off the Coast of Java. "The mysterious East faced me, perfumed like a flower, silent like death, dark like a grave." The enchantment was never broken. His ships took him across the Arabian Sea, up the Indian Ocean and into the China Sea; but the East where his heart lay comprised mainly the Malay Archipelago and the Gulf of Siam, within a magic circle of islands and bays and "mysterious shores."

A seaman's life in the British service, he

soon discovered, was no longer a gentleman's "lark" ending in a happy fortune as described by Marryat. It meant stern discipline such as he had never before known, and hard labor to the limit of man's endurance. The sea, as he phrased it, was "a strong medicine," which he nevertheless took without much repining. He touched life the world over. Everywhere he observed and listened, and afterwards his mind dwelt on experiences which, as they began to coalesce and fade, assumed a romantic glow. In retrospect he repeated the words of the Abbé Sieyès, *J'ai vécu*. "I shall always remember his eyes," said Epstein, who made a head of Conrad, "they were full of a lifetime." Conrad lived on shipboard and in the harbors of the East. He lived alone in his imagination as he sat on deck and mused during long silences under the light of the stars. The sea gave him, he said, "the full text of life" to read, as man and artist. What that text was he wished to tell the world with gloss and comment, in order that the things he had seen and the emotions they had awakened might

not die with him. Another spell, he playfully said, was cast over him by "some idle and frivolous magician."

When his hand first touched the side of a British ship, he did not know "six words of English." He was then in his twenty-first year, very late for learning a language well enough to write novels in it. English books in French and Polish, however, had been known to him since childhood. Among his earliest recollections, was reading aloud a page from a translation which his father was making of "The Two Gentlemen of Verona." He read also in translation Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, and other English novelists who had gained European fame, and was thus drawn indirectly into the great traditions of English fiction. "It is extraordinary," he remarked, remembering those days, "how well Mrs. Nickleby could chatter disconnectedly in Polish and the sinister Ralph rage in that language." As soon as he entered the British service he took up the new language with zest, reading all sorts of books. Shakespeare was

a companion on his voyages. Of the novelists, he seems very strangely to have liked Trollope best, though for exquisite art he afterwards gave the palm to James among the moderns. He was, as he tells the story, probably reading Trollope on the night before he began his own first novel, "Almayer's Folly," as far removed in manner and style from Trollope as one can imagine. The English language and literature, he believed, had a direct influence on his temperament and moulded his character. When asked why he wrote in English instead of French, which he had known longer and spoke more fluently, his reply was that "if I had not written in English I would not have written at all." As a stranger he was drawn to English by its flexibility and abundant synonyms, by the color inherent in its words and the haunting magic of its rhythms.

The task he set before him proved monotonous and exacting. When on the sea, he once remarked, the horizon was always moving with the ship, whereas the desk at which he

sat writing on shore "lay within the circle of an Eternal Shadow." For four or five years he wrestled at intervals "line by line" with "Almayer's Folly" before it could go to the printer. Like Flaubert's, his search for "the right word and the right accent" was unremitting. For a whole day he discussed with his friend, Mr. Ford Madox Ford, the question whether he should use *blue* or *azure, calm* or *serene* in the opening sentence of a short paragraph in "Youth." The decision went in favor of *azure* and *serene,* which gave him the cadence his ear required. He often preferred a word or idiom coming from French or Latin to one from the Anglo-Saxon, as if he sometimes thought in French rather than in English. Thus in "Nostromo," for instance, he wrote *made a step* for *took a step, arrested* for *stopped,* and *exposing* for *making known,* all suggestive of French or Latin originals. In general, he was to some extent deceived when he imagined that his English was that of one born of the language. No native, for example, would describe the motion of a ship in a storm

as *extravagant* unless in a freakish mood he wished to revive an obsolete meaning of the word, nor would he find "an immense flurry of the elements" adequate for the onset of a typhoon. "The ignorance of my strangeness" is a phrase without meaning. Inevitable were slips and peculiarities like these in a writer who came to English through French and Polish. His vocabulary was limited to his immediate needs. Words and idioms had to be sought for. They were never hovering about him as about Swift or Thackeray, waiting for the master's call. On the other hand, it took a foreigner to show that the English language by means of a fresh choice and allocation of words and phrases, somewhat in the Gallic order, may be invested with a strange beauty. No better example can be given than the passage over which Conrad labored for a day when Mr. Ford was with him. *Serene* and *azure* remain, but they are succeeded by *blue* as an epithet and by *calm* in its most appropriate sense. Each word, synonym, and phrase is placed with a view to the rhythm and the

final climax. The ship's cargo has caught fire but no flame is yet visible as Conrad writes:

"And she crawled on, do or die, in the serene weather. The sky was a miracle of purity, a miracle of azure. The sea was polished, was blue, was pellucid, was sparkling like a precious stone, extending on all sides, all round to the horizon—as if the whole terrestrial globe had been one jewel, one colossal sapphire, a single gem fashioned into a planet. And on the lustre of the great calm waters the *Judea* glided imperceptibly, enveloped in languid and unclean vapours, in a lazy cloud that drifted to leeward, light and slow; a pestiferous cloud defiling the splendour of sea and sky."

With Conrad the first essential of a novel was a good story taken directly from real life and standing in some personal relation with himself. It might be almost if not quite autobiographical as in "Youth," "The Shadow Line," and "Heart of Darkness." The sick negro of the *Narcissus* was in his watch. Or the story might be a seaman's yarn that he

heard somewhere in a distant seaport. Lord Jim he once saw "in the commonplace surroundings of an Eastern roadstead as the young man passed by—appealing—significant—under a cloud—perfectly silent." The rest of the story he learned from others. On one of his voyages everybody was talking about Almayer, and at last Conrad fell in with him forty miles up a Bornean river and dined with him. Though he never saw anyone concerned with the particular typhoon he described, the behavior of a cargo of coolies below deck in a storm was a subject of frequent conversation with his men on shipboard. It was during a voyage to the West Indies that he heard the story of a man who had "stolen single-handed a whole lighter full of silver" during a revolution somewhere in South America. This was the starting-point for "Nostromo." In all Conrad's novels and tales there is a large basis in fact. So far they are authentic.

The ordinary seaman spins his yarn, and that is the end of it. Such comment as he may make relates to the most obvious characteris-

tics of the people in his story. Equally for approval or disapproval, he has a repertory of oaths graded to the proper emphasis. Beyond that he is without psychological discernment. Having little imagination he accepts things as they are. His ship is his home as a cottage somewhere on shore might have been. It never occurs to him that his personality has been in any way affected by his life on the sea. A storm brings hard labor and exhaustion; a calm brings dull routine with time left over to sit about on deck and smoke and talk. But Conrad was no ordinary seaman. He had behind him the moral traditions of a Polish young gentleman. Everything he saw was interesting because it was new. He observed and reflected. He read books. He had keen psychological insight into the behavior of men. All the time there was developing in him a philosophy of life which his imagination expanded into a vision "of form and colour, of sunshine and shadows." How to transfer to the minds of his readers that vision was his task. What he saw and heard were "but op-

portunities" that chance offered him for the play of a creative imagination if he had it. "I have tried," he said after it was all over, "with an almost filial regard to render the vibration of life in the great world of waters, in the hearts of the simple men who have for ages traversed its solitudes, and also that something sentient which seems to dwell in ships—the creatures of their hands and the objects of their care."

The technique Conrad adopted has been regarded as over-difficult. Remonstrance Conrad met by saying that he must tell his story in his own way, not in the way of another. It might be a forthright narrative from the first to the last page as in "The Nigger of the Narcissus." But usually he began with a scene at some point well on in his story, and afterwards gave the previous events culminating in that scene. So far there was nothing uncommon in his manner. But in going back to check up on his first scene, he seemed to prefer not an open and direct path but a trackless maze. Chronology he set at defiance, turning

time upside down as in Sterne's "Tristram Shandy." Withal there must be a story-teller other than himself as in the most primitive narratives. When one has reached the end he is uncertain how he has arrived there. He must look back and retrace the main road he has travelled in relation to the byways, re-arranging all that he has seen and heard, in the sequence of time. This puts an undue strain upon the memory and imagination of readers who have little of either.

Especially perplexing is a seaman named Marlow whom the reader often meets as a sort of guide on the way. Who is he? Is he a mere screen for Conrad himself? Or is he "a familiar spirit" or "an attendant dæmon" such as whispered in the ear of Socrates? Marlow is really never quite the same being on his successive appearances, as was implied by Conrad himself when he said: "He haunts my hours of solitude, when, in silence, we lay our heads together in great comfort and harmony; but as we part at the end of a tale I am never sure that it may not be for the last time." The man

lived and died with a book, but he might be brought back to life, a little changed in aspect and mind. In "Youth" where he first appeared, as the chronicler of Conrad's initial voyage to the East, he was hardly more than the author himself under another name. The idea that then lay back of him was the old understanding, before newspapers had taught men to read, that a story was something to be listened to, not a book for the eye. Such were very ancient tales. The relator might be a magician whose business it was to entertain at night a pharaoh whose conscience would not let him sleep; or a clever girl who knew how to keep a grand vizier in so happy a mood through a thousand and one nights that he had no desire to order her head cut off as soon as he saw the sun rising above the horizon. The epics of Homer were recited by bards who had a manner and personality of their own. Marlow, a late survivor of the race, is a mariner, not yet ancient, who has knocked about the world and comes into port, considerably disillusioned but with a mind

teeming with scandals of land and sea. On the whole he is a happy man in his chair by a table, with a glass before him and a cigar between thumb and finger, spinning a yarn to a company of silent listeners. He first began to moralize in "Heart of Darkness" while he sat on a yacht on one of the lower reaches of the Thames "cross legged right aft leaning against the mizzen mast," having "the pose of a Buddha preaching in European clothes and without a lotus flower." He was becoming a psychologist with views on the mentality of the people he had met in the African jungle. Later in "Chance" he was one of the characters sharing in the story. There Conrad accused him of being cynical in his attitude towards the mind of the feminist and let him make his final exit, to be seen no more afterwards. When Conrad described him he gave him his own "sunken cheeks," "yellow complexion," and "ascetic aspect."

Marlow was created because Conrad felt the need of a character through whom he could speak in various moods. Since Fielding

the traditional way in English fiction has been for the author to step to the front and do the talking without disguise. This practice Conrad, with Maupassant and Flaubert before him, presumably looked upon as bad art. Another way has been to make some character in a particular novel one's own mouthpiece, such as Conrad partially did in his Dr. Monygham of "Nostromo." Still another way is that of Mr. H. G. Wells, in the majority of whose novels the leading male character is a reflection essentially of himself. Thus we have Wells step by step through the long career he has run from a draper's assistant to the exponent of the social or political theory current during the month he happens to be writing. As a novelty, Conrad tried out the experiment of putting the entire narrative and comment into the mouth of another seaman, for whose opinions he could not be held strictly responsible. He wanted it to appear that another was holding the lantern up to his characters, though the light was in his own hand. The dramatic device gave him large freedom of expression.

From the first, however, Marlow proved to be a rather awkward character. As the reciter of a short tale he was unnecessary; of a long one, recalling exactly conversations he had casually overheard, he was a convention hard to accept. As a subtle psychologist exploring the mind of Lord Jim, he became what Henry James called him, "that preposterous master-mariner." Reluctantly Conrad had to give him up.

Still Conrad could never cut loose from the idea that a story should be accounted for. When Marlow dropped out others took his place. Sometimes there were three or four story-tellers in a single novel. This procedure, common in the old epic narratives, appeared to Conrad, I daresay, as perfectly natural. He was accustomed to listen for hours while the night slipped away to the yarns of seamen as he moved from port to port. Of a story wandering through the East he might catch a part in one place and other parts elsewhere. He might have the end long before he had the middle or the beginning. So when he sat

down to retell the story throughout it would be good psychology to say that an unconscious impulse would lead him to keep more or less to the form which chance gave him originally. One may, for example, surmise how "Lord Jim" happens to have a structure almost as complicated as any romance by a Greek rhetorician. What Conrad knew from his own sight of the water-clerk he relates first. What he had heard from others about how the young man was reduced to this precarious position he puts for convenience' sake into one mouth, which is the mouth of Marlow. It is a long story that Marlow tells of the cruise of the pilgrim ship, of Jim's betrayal of his trust, the judicial enquiry, the young man's confession and resolves for the future. After that there is another story of how the young man redeemed himself, which, known only vaguely by Conrad or those who had heard the details of Jim's cowardice, had to be put together, piece by piece, out of a packet of letters. Most of Conrad's novels, long and short alike, conform to a pattern that may be accounted for in this

way. "Lord Jim," "Victory," "Chance," "The Rescue," and "The Arrow of Gold" differ only in intricacy.

It is not to be assumed that the hand of a master is ever absent. Whether a story first came to Conrad piecemeal or as a whole, it must open with a dramatic scene when retold. Of his manner in its simplest form, "Karain" is representative. The Malay chief is first portrayed going about with his face over his shoulder. The curiosity of the reader being thus awakened, Conrad lets the Malay tell why he is afraid of the empty space behind him, and then relates humorously how the ghost of fear was laid. Again, why does Falk as he sits sprawling in a chair draw "the palms of both his hands down his face, giving at the same time a slight, almost imperceptible, shudder"? What lies behind that gesture? Why also do "the clear blue eyes" of Lord Jim darken and his lips tremble when spoken to? What lies behind the rush of blood to his head? Is it humiliation? Or is it disappointment? Answers come out at some stage of the

story. It may be near the beginning or near the end.

There is no easy-going narrative as in Scott or Defoe, who had a way of putting in events out of place as if they had poor memories. Theirs was an art of forgetfulness. With Conrad everything was premeditated in the interest of suspense—not the suspense of mere incident as in tales of mystery, but the suspense of incident—words and acts—that determine character. To gain suspense of this kind it was his habit to begin with long conversations about his men and women before they actually appear on the stage. Kurtz in "Heart of Darkness" is perfectly visualized from what is told of him. We never see him in action; we see him only dying; and yet we know him well. The former captain of the unnamed ship in "The Shadow Line" is not introduced at all, but we infer what he was by the terror he struck into the mind of his chief mate. Lena in "Falk," though present, utters no word and yet her physical beauty dominates the action. The first sight of Doña Rita coming down the

stairs in "The Arrow of Gold" is delayed until after an illusion of her strange beauty and perverse character has been created in the imagination of the reader and of the man destined to become her victim. And the novel Conrad was writing when death overtook him was named "Suspense." Napoleon is at Elba. Though Conrad was well into the novel, no glimpse is given of the Emperor preparing for his return; and yet Napoleon fills the imaginations of thousands of men and women at Genoa, who are looking towards Elba, uncertain of the day and hour when their hero will escape. None of Conrad's English contemporaries has approached him in his brilliant use of suspense involving character. At times he reminds one of Homer, who instead of describing Helen made her beauty the occasion of a ten-years' war between rival nations.

Conrad's concern, first and last, was with the devious ways of human behavior. "You may take it from a man who has lived a rough, a very rough life," he remarked, "that it is the

subtleties of personalities, and contacts, and events, that count for interest and memory." Even in his most distinctive sea-pieces with their wonderful descriptions of moving or still waters, light and darkness, the actors are all there in the forefront of the scene. All that occurs in "Youth" is pervaded by the spirit of a young man who feels that he will "last forever, outlive the sea, the earth, and all men." In "The Shadow Line" the same young man, obtaining his first command, passes out of the glamour of youth into weariness and dissatisfaction as he learns from hard experience that life has no rest. "The Nigger of the Narcissus" is the study of a sick negro's mind, pathetic, brutal, mysterious, repulsive like his face, and of its sentimental influence upon a ship alive with men, no two of whom are much alike. "Typhoon" was written round the fright and despair of the coolies under the hatches while Captain MacWhirr, a seaman without imagination, steered the *Nan-Shan* straight through the terrific storm and at last reached port with a ship looking as if "the

crowd on board had fished her out somewhere from the bottom of the sea." Everywhere the theme is mass or individual psychology.

The complete mind Conrad aimed to portray so far as he could understand it. In the endeavor he made no use of the mechanism of current psychology. He laid no claim to the discovery of "complexes," leaving it to the reader to unearth, if he liked, a perfect example of the inferiority complex in Lord Jim. Nor did he distinguish sharply between the conscious and the unconscious activities of the mind, though he recognized both aspects of human behavior. Such generalizations as he arrived at were the old ones, which it was his business to interpret anew. Conrad was essentially an impressionist. Perhaps he carried further than any other modern novelist except Henry James inferences from external behavior, down to the glance or the smile with, say, a grimness behind it. What he was after is what is going on within, which may be inner destruction. In Kurtz it is the utter disintegration of character under African influences,

with a momentary light at the end, when the man dying sees the horror of it all as he contrasts himself as he is with what he was before he came into the Congo. In that flash, Kurtz was confronted, the Greeks would have said, by his two selves. "The Secret Agent" is a study of "the logical processes of perverse unreason," as seen in the anarchist. In "Under Western Eyes" the subject shifts to "the moral anarchism" of the revolutionist. Both novels end in dreadful tragedies. The one in madness; the other in the hideous fate of Razumov, the Russian spy, who goes out of the book with both eardrums cracked by the heavy hand of one of the revolutionists whom he has betrayed. Razumov will listen no more.

What, in lighter vein, is in the mind of the girl who has seen no man but her father since she began to do up her hair, and what does a little flirtation between her and a young officer mean to both of them, are the questions raised and answered in "A Smile of Fortune." Again, a captain takes aboard and conceals a seaman from another ship who has committed

murder under peculiar circumstances. The unexpected ways in which the presence of the newcomer works upon the mind of the captain is the theme of "The Secret Sharer." Let purely material interests dominate the motives of men and what will result is related in "Nostromo." Or let a rough weather-beaten sailor like Tom Lingard of "The Rescue" fall in love and get a glimpse of paradise, and what will be the consequences? Which will win—passion or honor? All is told, so far as Conrad could divine it, with subtle analysis and comment, with the reservation, however, that something must be left untold, for there is no full explanation of human conduct. The mystery of contradiction remains.

A contradiction that fascinated Conrad as it has fascinated others is the way that fear reshapes itself so that it appears to be something else. "Men," says Conrad, "have gone, alone and trembling, into graveyards at midnight—just to see what would happen." If a man walks through calmly without lifting a hair we call him courageous. If he stumbles over

a grave and in a panic makes a quick exit, we call him a coward. So on a higher plane it may be said of the soldier who goes into battle. In other circumstances fear may manifest itself as cunning or treachery or cruelty. And there are still other aspects of fear in Conrad's novels. "The leaven of hope," in Lord Byron's phrase, "is fear." On these secret alliances between fear and other impulses Plato remarks in the "Phaedo," where Socrates is made to say that all except philosophers are courageous only from fear and because they are cowards. In Lord Jim fear first shows itself as cowardice and afterwards as bravery. Doña Rita of "The Arrow of Gold" finds a compensation for fear in dangerous intrigues in behalf of Don Carlos. The Nigger of the Narcissus is haunted by the fear of death which he pretends to elude down to the moment his eyes blaze up and go out. With Kurtz fear sinks into despair on the approach of death. Winnie Verloc of "The Secret Agent," who has quite properly put a knife into her miserable husband, leaps into the sea

as the only escape from her vision of the gallows. She has not visualized the gruesome incidents of drowning and of the day after. Karain, the Malay chieftain who is shadowed by the spectre of a friend whom he has shot, is freed of his delusion by a young Englishman, who takes from a pocket one of those gilt sixpences that were struck off in honor of Queen Victoria's jubilee, punches a hole near the rim, and tells him to wear it with a piece of ribbon round his neck as the most potent charm known among white men against evil spirits. Suggestion, as the psychologists would say, does its work perfectly. Thereafter Karain walked with his face in front of him.

Fear passes into terror, and terror on into shock, which, involving the entire nervous system, is much more complex than being afraid. When the cruel governess of Flora de Barral in "Chance" snarls out to the girl, her professed lover standing coldly by, that her father, whom she adores, is "a cheat and a swindler," there are no tears, no convulsive sobbing. Flora's face turns deadly pale, her eyes dilate

enormously with a wild stare, her mouth opens wide for breath, and at last comes in gasps a forlorn cry for help in her desolation. That cry when she becomes aware that she is abandoned by her governess and her lover, brings her back to herself and saves her, Conrad would imply, from idiocy on the spot. To another conclusion is worked out the shock that struck Jasper, in "Freya of the Seven Isles," dumb and immovable when his gallant brig hit a reef and in the wreck went down all he possessed and all his hopes of happiness with Freya. The issue is madness and death. And to pass by the rest, there is Arlette of "The Rover" appearing, as she stands in the hall of the Escampobar Farm, "like a corpse out of the grave, with a blood-soaked blanket over her shoulders . . . fearing to look in any direction for long lest she should see coming through the empty air some mutilated vision of the dead" at Toulon—where she has just left father and mother slain by the revolutionists. Arlette is Conrad's most subtle study of shock and at the same time his finest feminine

creation, resembling, when love comes to mitigate the memory of bloodshed and terror, Emily Brontë's Catherine, in beauty, vitality, and vehemence of passion. Not Doña Rita, as Conrad would have it, but Arlette has most in her of "the women of all time."

These characters and scenes were evoked by an imagination darkened with apprehensions and fears. "His was not a happy nature," Mrs. Conrad has written of her husband, "and he often anticipated trouble long before it came." And she adds the apparent contradiction that "he had a curious way of shrinking from actualities when it came to suffering." That is, he seemed to court mental pain and at the same time to shun it. The first impulse, however, was involuntary; the second only, and perhaps not that, was a voluntary act. Inevitably this sensitive soul, living in an age of sentimental gladness, was called, by men who read him in his books, a pessimist—a charge which he hotly resented, saying that "declared pessimism" is an arrogant attitude towards life from which a writer must steer clear if he

would be loyal to his emotions. With equal spirit he retorted against the charge of cynicism. Nevertheless human life as Conrad had seen and experienced it since childhood was for most people a quiet desperation.

The history of men on this earth, he remarked, might be written on a cigarette paper "in one phrase of infinite poignancy": "They were born, they suffered, and they died. . . . And yet it is a great tale." A writer of complete detachment might revise Conrad's summary of men's fate to read: They were born, they lived, and they died. But no great writer dealing with human affairs has ever shown such detachment, nor could he if he would. At times the Greeks may have come close to it, and yet Plato looked upon death as a release from human ills, and, while death delayed, dreamed of a Utopia. Though Conrad's mind was inclined to dwell upon the hard lot of mankind he was no more a pessimist than was Plato. Any one who has really lived must agree with him when he says that "it is very difficult to be wholly joyous or wholly sad on

this earth." Still, Conrad was fair game for Max Beerbohm in that famous caricature which represents the novelist standing on a sun-lit shore somewhere in the Pacific, his legs casting a shadow behind him over the yellow sands, as he gazes at a serpent rising out of a skull's eyes in protest against the intruder. His curiosity awakened by the sight, Conrad has just exclaimed: "What a delightful coast! One catches an illusion that one might forever be almost gay here."

Conrad's use of the word illusion all through his novels may be easily misunderstood. In one place or another he wrote of faith, hope, love, fear, pity, ambition, patriotism, all our affections and all our ideals, even our perceptive and reasoning faculties, as if they were illusions. His going to sea, he said, several times over, was an illusion. But he did not mean by the word what Schopenhauer meant by it. His was not a doctrine of negation. So far as he thought his philosophy out, it was akin, in its broad aspects, to the idealism of Berkeley, according to which the world

is a creation out of the images of the mind. In that sense the world *is* an illusion, though a vision perhaps, Conrad would say, of "remote unattainable truth, seen dimly." Like Don Quixote every man wanders through his own peculiar realm of illusions. There are the illusions of the faithful, and the faithless, of the compassionate and the hard-hearted, of the generous-minded and the miser, of the lover or the patriot, and so on through all the characteristics that distinguish one personality from another. Their illusions may give joy or sorrow, turmoil or rest; in Conrad's summary, "they can make life and death appear serene, inspiring, tormented, or ignoble."

There is nothing inherently depressing in the philosophy of illusions. Let it be granted that happiness rests on unfulfilled dreams and desires, with the corollary that fulfilment is always attended with some loss and often with complete disenchantment. The wise man asks of fortune a new shuffle of the cards and starts in immediate pursuit of another illusion, keeping up the chase until confronted by the last

inevitable illusion where he must stop. Such a man may be forever happy in his illusions. To Calderón the life of man seemed to be a dream. For all that the living world still remains, to quote Conrad again, "a spectacle for awe, love, adoration, or hate, if you like . . . never for despair." And of the business of the novelist, he continues: "I would ask that in his dealings with mankind he should be capable of giving a tender recognition to their obscure virtues. I would not have him impatient with their small failings and scornful of their errors. I would not have him expect too much gratitude from that humanity whose fate, as illustrated in individuals, it is open to him to depict as ridiculous or terrible. I would wish him to look with a large forgiveness at men's ideas and prejudices, which are by no means the outcome of malevolence, but depend on their education, their social status, even their professions."

Illusions as fixed ideas (or delusions) engrossing the mind may become the source of the most tragic emotions. Where happiness is

sought, pain and death may be found lying in wait. Macbeth thought that he could be happy only on the throne of Cawdor. Hamlet must avenge the murder of his father in order to set right the affairs of Denmark. Othello, infected with a false idea, could find no peace except in ridding his house of Desdemona. In the emotional explosions they all went down to death, taking friends and foes along with them. Most of Conrad's tales are tragedies or nondescript tragi-comedies. From one point of view "Nostromo" is the story of the curse wrought by the evil spirits haunting the San Tomé mine, who lead all who come under their influence through bloodshed and terror to the sacrifice of the natural human affections before the altar of Mammon. The treasure brings no happiness. The weary Don Martin Decoud, his pockets filled with bars of silver from the San Tomé mine, sinks at last into the sea. The magnificent Capitaz de Cargadores is shot by mistake and dies with none of the companions around him whom he has betrayed. The Goulds, husband and wife, live

on for a time alone in "the Treasure House of the World," watching love, "the most splendid of illusions," burn low and go out. In retrospect life was for them all a nightmare. Utter, too, is the tragedy of "The End of the Tether," where Captain Whalley, of all Conrad's seamen the one who most awakens compassion, loses his fortune, his ship, his sight, and his life in devotion to the imagined welfare of a daughter who in new surroundings was little concerned for the fate of her father. His last cry was "God seems to have forgotten me." Still more terrible is the mental ruin, complete and absolute, that a scoundrel metes out to Jasper in "Freya of the Seven Isles."

Sometimes Conrad sought to mitigate the tragedy of his conclusions. In a grim sense Kurtz gains a moral victory in that he has while dying a vision of the life he has lived, which makes him stare and whisper the one word "horror." Kurtz has the distinction of being one of the very few men in literature as in life who ever have a true image of themselves and pass impartial judgment upon their

own conduct. Though Lena in "Victory" makes the supreme sacrifice, it is as she wishes. Hers, Conrad remarks, "was a tremendous victory, capturing the very sting of death in the service of love." The tragic tension of "Chance" slackens towards the close when Flora de Barral is won over by the perfect devotion of Captain Anthony and so finds an escape from "a life of moral anguish." And finally Tom Lingard of "The Rescue" comes out of his fool's paradise alive, though damaged, a wiser man.

It is a complaint that these novels are not "cheerful reading," as if tragedy should ever be cheerful. An editor of a New York magazine rejected "Freya of the Seven Isles," though intimating that he would take it if the author would give it a "sunny" ending. Conrad's infuriated comment on the suggestion was, "I would see all the American editors damned in heaps before lifting my pen for that task." The story back of "Freya" Conrad had once heard while in Singapore. It was generally known there how Jasper's brig had

been run on a reef off Macassar by a Dutch commander who would be rid of a rival trader, and how for months the young man watched the wreck from the shore until he became mad at the sight and died. As here Conrad never felt free to alter much the outlines of the tales he found ready-made. These tales were of life itself. His task was to transmute them into art. In the process he could not, as an honest man, fake a sentimental outcome to a situation which nature had made tragic. He might, of course, have thrust in a humorous scene here and there as a relief, following the great example of Shakespeare. But that would have been for him inventing humor where he saw none. Except occasionally, as in the case of the grotesque illusions of Shomberg, Conrad almost invariably held fast to the French and Greek view that the tragic emotions should run their course with no disturbance from comedy. Such was his right.

The result, however, was not an "Antigone" or "Phèdre" but several appalling tragedies resembling the melodramatic performances of

the Elizabethan period. Where the action springs from a crime no one is troubled by anything that may happen, but where it springs from misplaced loyalty or devotion, as often in Conrad's novels, the writer has the difficult problem of satisfying the reader by his psychology. It was from an impulse of misdirected generosity that Lear divided his kingdom into three parts and gave them to his three daughters with disastrous consequences. Cordelia, however, remains faithful to the end. It was also a generous impulse that induced a Spanish gentleman to put on armor and ride forth to right all the wrongs of the world. The absurdity of the undertaking keeps the tragedy as it moves beneath the surface hardly visible until the waters grow clear at the end. Though the motivation of "Freya of the Seven Isles" is complicated, the undoing of Jasper was really a direct result of his taking on board as his mate a happy scoundrel who by a secret sale of the ship's arms to a native chief exposed the skipper to the vengeance of a trader who hated him. In the

kindness of his heart Jasper was blinded by the illusion that he could cure of evil ways a man who had the voice of an angel. He was mistaken. Neither Shakespeare nor Cervantes, any more than Conrad, was greatly concerned over the moral order of the universe. They were not interested in building model worlds. They presented life as they saw it, without and within, in a large vision which included the humorous aspect of things. But they could never have narrowed that vision down to a tale like Conrad's having a formula to show how "a perfidious destiny took advantage of a generous impulse" to lead a man to destruction. About that Shakespeare and Cervantes had no knowledge.

Elsewhere Conrad's psychology appears circumscribed if not a little perverse. Though he retained as his pattern a story from real life, his imagination had to do the filling in. It was his custom to take men and women whom he had known in any part of the world and to convey them to any place where he wanted them, from the Mediterranean basin,

for example, to South America or from the Gulf of Mexico to the Malay seas. With these characters, who might differ materially in temperament from those in the original story, he reconstructed the tale. Here his psychological discernment came into full play, with, I think, varying results. His colony of Italians somewhere in South America was not a happy transplantation. They were never really acclimatized. Nor is it easy to understand the infatuation of Tom Lingard and Mrs. Travers. Nor, for another example, why the death of Lena should have been made dependent upon mere chance. Had Captain Davidson arrived a few minutes earlier the girl would not have been shot. In a final view "Nostromo," "The Rescue," "Victory," "The Arrow of Gold," and some others, impressive as they are, seem artificial, seem to be made up more or less, and the mind reverts to certain other novels and tales—to "Youth," "Heart of Darkness," "Typhoon," and "The Nigger of the Narcissus," and to "Lord Jim" for Conrad's psychology triumphant.

"Lord Jim" tells how a young man lost his honor and afterwards regained it. A man's course downward is comparatively easy to depict, but a course upward is difficult without resort, as was the custom of Defoe and Richardson, to a formal morality which fails to convince. In George Eliot, who gave the cue to modern psychological fiction, the principal characters usually make a slow descent to the City of Destruction. In two conspicuous instances she turned their faces upward to the Celestial City. But the ascent for Silas Marner was short and not very steep. For Gwendolen Harleth, who let her husband drown when she might have saved him, the way was long and circuitous; and it is not very clear how she reached the top. Between "The Pilgrim's Progress," from which George Eliot took her design as well as imagery, and Conrad's "Lord Jim" there is in English fiction no very notable instance of the recovery of one's better self. Taking a wider sweep, Schopenhauer asked why the very greatest writers of all times like Dante and Milton have suc-

ceeded with their Hells and failed with their Heavens. His reply was that they had to depend for their material upon their own lives and experiences, wherein they found enough for an inferno but nothing left over for a paradise—except dreams and visions unrelated to anything actually existing in this world. Conrad, however, set going a tragic action with a movement upward and along this way got at the heart of man. As Marlow says, Lord Jim is "one of us."

This romantic young man, given to dreams of heroic achievements as he stood on the bridge of the *Patna,* looking out upon a calm sea under the silence of the stars, was unaware that cowardice lurked somewhere within him. There was no danger, he often said to himself, that he could not face. But when sudden danger came, he was seized with a panic and abandoned the ship, regardless of the fate of the eight hundred pilgrims on board who might go to the bottom of the sea. The old ship, however, was picked up and brought safely into port, and then he was face to face

with his cowardice. His humiliation in the eyes of men, though abject enough, did not trouble him as much as the acute feeling that his honor was gone. He had missed his chance. He had not lived up to the ideals of his dreams. His honor must be recovered at all hazards for his personal satisfaction. Another chance came and he redeemed himself completely as a fearless ruler of the natives "in a lost corner of the earth." His honor secure, nothing else counted longer. When at last he was encompassed with enemies, and his native wife pleaded with him to fight, his reply was, "There is nothing to fight for . . . nothing is lost." "Nothing can touch me," he added, in a last flicker of superb egoism. With a proud and defiant glance towards the friends who had deserted him he stood erect and unflinching to be shot dead. Thus in obedience to the illusions of "a romantic conscience," such as was Conrad's own, Lord Jim passed into silence without murmur or protest.

Lord Jim and Conrad's other characters cannot be detached from the scenes where

they play their parts. The background is never a mere screen upon which an image is thrown; it is always a true environment which has, as it were, a psychology of its own. The self-immolation of Lord Jim belongs to a land into which men wander, only to disappear after a time, nobody knowing quite how. The Nigger is nothing apart from the ship and the men in the forecastle. Likewise Captain MacWhirr has no significance except as the commander who takes the *Nan-Shan* through a typhoon. Kurtz is a voice out of the darkness of the Congo. Heyst, in "Victory," who falls into inaction, physical and mental, is under the spell of the islands of the Malay Archipelago. "One sees them lying about, clothed in their dark garment of leaves, in a great hush of silver and azure, where the sea without murmurs meets the sky in a ring of magic stillness." Everywhere the scene, though voiceless like Hermann's niece in "Falk," is a presence to be reckoned with. By a sort of illusion it appears to be, in form and color, the creation of the characters themselves, so

completely is the novelist's imagination fused with theirs. To them he transfers his own "cosmic" feeling, only that is a much abused word. The earth is infinitely older than man, where he came after unnumbered millions of years. Marlow, sailing from Patusan, had his last sight of Lord Jim as the young man stood in the evening twilight watching the schooner from the shore. To Marlow "that white figure in the stillness of coast and sea seemed to stand at the heart of a vast enigma." As the twilight deepened, Lord Jim "appeared no bigger than a child—then only a speck, a tiny white speck, that seemed to catch all the light left in a darkened world."

The visible universe reflected in our consciousness, awaking all emotions and all thoughts, remained for Conrad as it must remain for the rest of us an impenetrable mystery. What lies behind the mystery? Conrad could divine there no anthropomorphic being engaged in dealing out justice in a world of "cruel and absurd contradictions." He often called it fate. Rarely fate objectified as above

and apart giving joy and pain, but fate working in man and the world his mind creates, as his conscience, which is another name for his inheritance as moulded by the influences of childhood, not merely what is received from family and race but his entire inheritance from his species since the first appearance of man on earth.

ARNOLD BENNETT

## III

## ARNOLD BENNETT

THERE appear to be two or three different men in Arnold Bennett. The author of many books has had a way of putting aside one man and slipping into the skin of another by a process much like that depicted in Rose Macaulay's novel of alternating personalities, wherein Daisy may become Daphne, and Daphne may revert to Daisy, while one or the other of them, I forget which, takes the name of Marjorie Wynne and writes a novel called "Summer's Over," which both Daisy and Daphne contemplate with amazement as the exposure of emotions which they would prefer to have kept under cover were it not for the loss of royalties should the book be suppressed. Sometimes one of them looks five or six years older than the other, and in certain lights the face of one seems to be freckled, whereas the

complexion of the other remains forever speckless. Daisy, Daphne, and Marjorie have but one obvious trait in common. They are agreeable, though rather awkward, liars. This is the "one touch of nature" by which all three are made kin.

So of Arnold Bennett. What one makes out of him depends upon the angle of vision and the lights and shadows in the middle distance.

His novels, short stories, sketches, book reviews, plays, "trifles," and "pocket philosophies" have been in perpetual flow for a full quarter century. By 1903, he was writing a half million words a year, which is rather more than the total number in the English language. All told, he should now have to his credit fifteen millions of words. He has been able, he says, to "tear the entrails" out of "a pile of new books" and write "a fifteen-hundred-word *causerie* on them, passably stylistic, all inside sixty minutes." When the literary essay was an art it took Sainte-Beuve a week to write a *Causerie du Lundi,* with one morning off on the day of publication. Bennett,

coming later, has outdone even Trollope, who trained himself, with his watch on the table before him, to turn off two hundred and fifty words every fifteen minutes for three hours on a stretch. In the light of Bennett's achievement, Trollope's three thousand words from five to eight o'clock in the morning seem paltry, though in the old days it was thought to be a marvellous feat. Composed under high pressure, Bennett's miscellaneous books and essays may still amuse by their flippancy or mock seriousness, but it would never occur to anyone to re-read them. They are too thin for any language or any public except the English. Likewise the account with his early plays, written single-handed or in collaboration to increase the sale of his novels, is long since closed.

Other novelists have earned their bread largely as hack-writers. But at their worst, Thackeray and Fielding were never able to keep their minds moving, day in and day out, along a plane a degree or two beneath the intellectual. Their fugitive pieces are still being

collected and read for the ideas, the wit, and the humor that are always there in some measure. It was left for Bennett to carry professionalism in literature to the point where it becomes sheer commercialism. The question with him, frankly confessed in "The Truth about an Author," has been how much he could get for a certain number of words in an apt and pleasing arrangement. Stop at this point with Arnold Bennett and one is confronted with a writer whose other characteristics, whatever they may be, are submerged in commercialism.

This commercial spirit, somewhat abated at times, also pervades most of those novels which he has designated as "sensational serials" and "fantasias." When he wrote them he wanted "money in heaps" for new furniture or a house in the country or a yacht. The sensational novels, deriving about equally from Eugène Sue and the woman who called herself "Ouida," depict scenes intended to make the reader shiver, with interludes of "gilded vice," which is properly punished at

last to the satisfaction of respectable people who take their vices vicariously. The fantasias are light and humorous structures, built as a rule upon a single bizarre incident lying outside the realm of probability. What would the consequences be, Bennett asks himself, should the incident with which he sets out actually occur? Fantasy, realism, and social satire gaily mingle in the story he has to tell. A report, for instance, goes abroad that a shy painter, living in obscure London lodgings, is dead. The metropolitan press, which has never before noticed him, gives large space to his wonderful achievements and insists that he be buried in Westminster Abbey. "The greatest painter since Velasquez," however, is still alive, having died, as the Irishman would say, "by mistake," and so sees all the fuss that is being made over his dead body. It was his valet who died and was laid at rest in "the national Valhalla." Occasionally, for a more recent instance, we read in the newspapers of an attempt to kidnap a man on a yacht in order to hold him for ransom or for the law. Such a

tale was told some time ago of an elusive "oil king." Let us suppose, says Bennett, that a multi-millionaire entices a capitalist of somewhat lower degree upon his yacht for a humorously sinister purpose and sails away with him. What will be the story? Both of these novels have clever plots. "Buried Alive" was easily turned into a farce, and "The Vanguard" has the thrills required of the cinema.

It is noticeable that Bennett's fantasias usually begin better than they end and that they are likely to break down or run into diffuseness near the middle, thus lacking the perfect art of Max Beerbohm, who in a famous tale imagined a damsel for whom all the undergraduates of Oxford drowned themselves—except the one who jumped to his death from a window. Bennett has made his nearest approach to Zuleika Dobson in the wide-awake girl who plays havoc with the multi-millionaire and all other men on board the most luxurious yacht that was ever wet by Mediterranean waters. Reading the best of his fantasias, from the earliest onward, one

sees a genuine artistic sense winning against the purveyor of words. As Henry James remarked of Balzac, the man of business is doubled with the artist.

The man of business was a product of the Five Towns, where he was born and bred, and where, with few exceptions, he has placed, in whole or in part, the scene of his most characteristic novels. The Five Towns, now as well known in English fiction as Trollope's Barsetshire, were in Bennett's youth five distinct burroughs, lying close together in the upper valley of the Trent in Staffordshire. From north to south they were Tunstall, Burslem, Hanley, Stoke-upon-Trent, and Longton; which the novelist re-named Turnhill, Bursley, Hanbridge, Knype, and Longshaw. A sixth burrough, Fenton, through which the scene moves, was deliberately left out of the general title because the author preferred the long "i" in "five" to the short "i" in "six." That is, "Five Towns" suited his ear better than "Six Towns." Really one large sprawling town with outlying villages, the old bur-

roughs are the centre of a great industrial district for centuries known as the Potteries, where earthenware is produced in immense quantities, in the midst of coal-mining and iron-smelting. By day the atmosphere is as black as the mud under one's feet, while at night the works along the valley, when seen from above by the glare of furnaces through the overhanging smoke, assume fantastic shapes, resembling, it has been said by those who claim to know, the architecture of hell. On moonless nights it was for Bennett a romantic scene as there lay stretched out before him "acres of burning ironstone—a vast tremulous carpet of flame woven in red, purple, and strange greens."

The Five Towns Bennett saw from the point of view of a solicitor's son and clerk, who had received such scant education as the district could give. What most impressed him were the vast labors going forward under "the smoke-girt amphitheatre." Everywhere the watchword was work, continuous work, kept in pace with the hours of the clock.

Shopkeepers and manufacturers were clear-headed, shrewd, and outwardly honest, though they drove sharp bargains and could condone a theft provided the money stolen was not expended on books or pictures or pleasures but was properly used for getting a start in the world of business. Close-fisted, the men became misers at the age of fifty. Their families they ruled with rods of iron, enforcing prompt obedience, order, and rigid discipline. If a wife died before her husband, thrift demanded that there be no second marriage in case there were an unmarried daughter who might be reduced to the position of a servant to do the housework and sit in the kitchen. Between father and son there was little or no sympathy. Men of the older generation were perfectly satisfied with such virtues as they possessed. Though they might go to Manchester or London to buy goods, their outlook hardly extended beyond the industrial area. The culture of the arts and sciences, other than statistics, was unknown to them. As a young man Bennett heard the

word beautiful spoken only once or twice. Most families attended the Wesleyan chapels regularly from habit formed in childhood. When the season for religious revivals arrived the men became greatly interested in "the finance of salvation." The question then was how to keep down the cost of saving sinners. At one time it was proposed to try out a scientific "prayer gauge" which Tyndall had once not very seriously suggested as a means of determining the efficacy of prayer. The scheme was to pray for the patients in particular wards of several hospitals and leave the other wards unprayed for, and then observe and tabulate the results for publication in a local newspaper. Money and effort should never be spent unless there was a prospect of a full return. Success was measured by the fortune a man accumulated. "Money'll do owt" was a proverb of the Five Towns.

This early environment accounts for those aspects of Bennett's literary career that stand out prominently. The order and discipline

taught him in childhood as a means of saving time and money were never to depart from him. Brought up among machines, he still regards himself, says his wife, as "a machine" which must be kept running at full speed with the aid, if necessary, of patent medicines. His "How to Live on 24 Hours a Day" is a chart for him and for all men who would get the most out of time. It has been his habit, Mrs. Bennett adds, to carry about with him a notebook, so that no thought or perception that may come to him may be wasted. This is a sublimation of the Five Towns' frugality. Like a shopkeeper of Bursley, he has advertised and sold his wares for all he could obtain for them, raising the price of a paragraph from sixpence to a guinea as the demand has increased.

Suddenly the scene changed, and other influences began their work upon Bennett. At the age of twenty-one he broke away from the Five Towns and went up to London as a solicitor's clerk with a half-formed intention of reading law. His position he soon resigned

and drifted into journalism, towards which he had already inclined while living in the Five Towns, where he had contributed to one of the newspapers humorous sketches of municipal life. No doubt, as in the case of Edwin Clayhanger, he walked "the mean, black, smoke-palled streets" of Bursley with an unaccountable "flame" in his head leading him onward into a romantic realm of achievement under a brighter sun. The literary London into which Bennett found his way was the London of the 'nineties. It would be difficult to imagine a contrast in environment more extreme. While the age of Queen Victoria was drawing towards its close, all that her age had stood for in art, literature, and morals was being repudiated by the young radicals with whom Bennett associated. Life was freedom, not the restraint of the Five Towns. Money was not to be hoarded, but to be spent faster than it was earned. Dickens, Thackeray, and the rest of the mid-Victorians were self-complacent hypocrites. Go whatever way he might, a man's career rarely

brought the happiness which their novels promised. More often the end was premature death by disease or suicide. Frustration of one's plans and ideals was the rule of life. The apostles of the new creed, quite different from Primitive or Wesleyan Methodism, were Oscar Wilde and Aubrey Beardsley. The new Bible was "The Yellow Book."

The gods of fiction were mostly French. They were Flaubert, the Goncourts, Maupassant, and Turgenev (who was classed with the French because he was read in a French translation). The secondary divinities were Zola and Balzac. Tolstoi was too moralistic; and Dostoevsky was as yet imperfectly known. Like his friends, Bennett bowed his knee to the foreign gods. He learned through Maupassant how Flaubert had crucified himself in search of the exact word and exact phrase for the expression of his ideas and emotions. *Le mot juste* and *l'écriture artiste* were the watchwords of the 'nineties. This exaltation of the æsthetic aspect of literature often led to a play of words apart from subject matter

as if style were not inherent in the material with which a great master moulds his art. Reading in French fiction incessantly, Bennett served his apprenticeship under Flaubert and Maupassant. "I wrote," he says of that period, "with a nice regard for English; I would lavish a night on a few paragraphs; and years of this penal servitude left me with a dexterity in the handling of sentences that still surprises the possessor of it."

The facile journalist, who learned to manipulate words and phrases without expressing ideas, acquired a style which, though never distinguished, was to prove adequate for narrative and description. He tried his hand with a short story called "A Letter Home," which was accepted by "The Yellow Book," and then proceeded to his first novel, "A Man from the North" (1898), which was an imaginative account of himself since he had left Bursley. Then came "Anna of the Five Towns" (1902), reflecting not primarily himself but the life and surroundings of which he had been a part. With the publication of

this novel he felt sure that he possessed, as his London friends were telling him, "the artistic temperament."

His first experiments in fiction show an immature novelist struggling with his art, as yet imitative of the form and fashion (including the mannerisms) of French models. He proclaimed himself of the "naturalistic" school of Zola, which professed to give the facts of life, however disagreeable they might be to the reader. Mood and color must be "grey, sinister, and melancholy." In the 'nineties most people were "the victims of circumstances." Hence novels should end disastrously. Bennett held to the sentimental formula which had prevailed in French literature since Rousseau. The young sailor of "A Letter Home" is a down-and-outer—"done for." Anna of the Five Towns, out of a sense of duty, must marry a man whom she does not love, and the real lover must end his life by jumping into an abandoned pit-shaft after his father has hanged himself. On the conclusion of "A Man from the North" Ben-

nett made the pertinent comment: "In obedience to my philosophy, I made myself a failure. . . . I decided that he should go through most of my own experiences, but that instead of fame and a thousand a year he should arrive ultimately at disillusion and a desolating suburban domesticity." His first title for this novel was to have been "In the Shadow." Though Bennett himself passed out of the shadow, his double must marry the cashier of a cheap restaurant, never write his projected novel, and remain forever in the shadow on a salary of two hundred pounds a year. As in Wells's "Love and Mr. Lewisham," breathing the atmosphere of the same period, fame and ambition go down in the struggle with sex.

Once out of the shadow, Bennett's imagination was free to play with the life and scenes of his childhood and youth, humorously or seriously. More than half of his novels have some connection with that dismal industrial area. The great Five Towns novels, however, belong to his middle years. They are

"The Old Wives' Tale" (1908), and the trilogy comprising "Clayhanger" (1910), "Hilda Lessways" (1911), and "These Twain" (1916). Much the same in art and method is "Riceyman Steps" (1923), in which the scene shifts to London—to "the great metropolitan industrial district of Clerkenwell." These novels, though not so entertaining as the fantasias, represent Bennett at his best. Pertinent to their composition is the author's remark: "When I am working on my own initiative, for the sole advancement of my artistic reputation, I ignore finance and think of glory alone." Whatever may be said of any one of the rest, there is no compromise between glory and commercialism in "The Old Wives' Tale" or in "Clayhanger." Here the artist, such as he was, is supreme.

The Clayhanger trilogy relates the personal and family history of Edwin Clayhanger of Bursley and Hilda Lessways of Turnhill, before and after marriage. To do this in Bennett's way required seventeen hundred pages. Outwardly Edwin Clayhanger is

a complete portrait of the young man of the Five Towns as he was towards the close of the nineteenth century. For contrast he is set against the generation before him. His father, Darius Clayhanger, a half-naked boy, was put to work at the age of seven in a potbank for fifteen hours a day at a shilling a week. By industry "the child man" rose to become the leading printer and stationer in Bursley. Still, he always remained, as he was aware, a makeshift man of makeshift works. That he might have a properly educated successor, he sent Edwin to "the historic Middle School," which Bennett himself had attended. There was trouble, however, when the father attempted to force his only son into the business; for Edwin, inspired by the father of a schoolmate, wanted to become an architect so that he might make over the stucco houses of the town into "red brick with terra cotta facings and red tiles." He wanted to buy books and read them. He wanted to see London and Brighton, where people, it seemed from the newspapers he read, lived differently.

There ensued a terrific quarrel in which the father won. Edwin developed the printing business beyond anything ever heard of in Bursley, introducing lithography to the wonder of the whole district. He married the strange and perverse Hilda, who gave him what Bennett thought he needed, a good "shaking up" out of the deadly routine into which he had fallen. The clash of temperaments gradually subsided, and the ideals of the new generation were attained. Husband and wife were reasonably happy. They took a house in the country whence the gentleman could ride into town to business; and money enough was left over for travel also. The day arrived when Edwin Clayhanger could exclaim: "So this is Brighton!"

The idea of "The Old Wives' Tale," Bennett's masterpiece, first came to him, he says, back in the 'nineties after reading Maupassant's "Une Vie," which he and all his friends, except George Bernard Shaw, then regarded "with mute awe." In the last chapter of Maupassant's novel, Jeanne, once as

young and beautiful as a face out of Paul Veronese, now old, ill, and restless, sees in vision her whole life—her devoted parents in their château by the sea, when all were prosperous and happy, her marriage and disenchantment, the birth of a son since grown up and living like herself in poverty, but far away in Paris. The family has gone down in ruin. One evening long after, the truth of Maupassant's tale was brought home to Bennett's mind with startling vividness as he observed an incident while dining in a Parisian restaurant. There stood actually before him Maupassant's contrast between youth and age. A pale, slim, beautiful waitress giggled when she saw "a fat, grotesque, old woman come in and take a seat for dinner." "Every stout, ageing woman," Bennett reflected, "is not grotesque—far from it—but there is an extreme pathos in the mere fact that every stout, ageing woman was once a young girl with the unique charm of youth in her form and movements and in her mind. And the fact that the change from the young girl to the

stout, ageing woman is made up of an infinite number of infinitesimal changes, each unperceived by her, only intensifies the pathos." Here in the silent progressive havoc wrought by time on the human frame and mind, Bennett felt that he had a great theme for a novel. Again and again he looked at the subject and walked away from it for years. He sat down to his novel in earnest while staying at a village near Fontainebleau, and after interruptions finished it there in the summer of 1908. So absorbed was he in its composition that it took him only eight months to write the entire novel containing two hundred thousand words. He wrote it, says Mrs. Bennett, in printed characters "with original and clever illuminations" that the manuscript might also be a work of art.

Bennett's mind reverted to a draper's shop which he well knew as a boy, in St. Luke's Square in the town of Bursley. The novel tells of the rise, decline, and end of a family named Baines, who ran the shop through two generations, with the complete life histories

of two women of the second generation. The English "Une Vie" thus has two heroines instead of Maupassant's one. Constance marries her father's manager and with him carries on the business until his death, and thereafter continues it alone until ousted. Sophia, in revolt against the Five Towns' humdrum, elopes with a commercial traveller, who abandons her in Paris, where with the assistance of two hundred pounds in bank notes, taken from her husband's pocket while he is in a drunken sleep, she opens a pension and by skilful profiteering, called thrift in the Five Towns, amasses a fortune of thirty-five thousand pounds during and after the siege of Paris. Her identity discovered by chance at the age of fifty, she returns to Bursley to live for the rest of her life.

No one had ever written novels much like these. Neither Thackeray, who was fond of memoirs and family histories; nor Maupassant, from whom was derived the hint for "The Old Wives' Tale"; nor Dostoevsky, whom Bennett now put at the head of all

the novelists that have ever appeared in the world; nor Balzac, though one may easily imagine Bennett setting out to do for the Five Towns what Balzac had done for all France. However much Bennett may have learned from his great predecessors, his art and procedure were his own. The Clayhanger trilogy and "The Old Wives' Tale" have, in the Aristotelian sense, no beginning, nor middle, nor end. And of plot as understood by the Victorians there are only traces. The villain is retained to work mischief and finally to pay the penalty for misdeeds by imprisonment, transportation, or miserable death. But except for this conventional blot, the idea of retribution is either absent or so concealed as to be barely visible. Nor is there a situation to be unfolded and brought to a conclusion. This form of novel, which Bennett had experimented with in "Anna of the Five Towns," he discarded, presumably that the action of his characters might not be cramped by the restraint of a fixed frame of circumstance. Henry James, who read "The Old

Wives' Tale" and the first two novels in the trilogy, was interested in the particulars as he went along, but was disappointed as he closed the books because Bennett presented no "case." Why was the story written? he wondered. Why this saturation of facts and statistics? What was the author's "intention"? James could find no intention. To him these novels had no meaning. They had, in a Galsworthy phrase, "no enclosing atmosphere of an idea."

In their art James and Bennett are as far from each other as the poles of the earth. For James in his mature manner the novel involved a psychological problem in the relationship between a small group of characters. Everything that did not contribute to the solution was ruthlessly excluded, so that there might be no confusion or misunderstanding in the artistic process. James hung his characters, as it were, in a vacuum. In order to fix their social caste he might, it is true, designate the occupation of one or another of them, but he was unaccustomed to

do more. Thus in "The Ambassadors" the Newsomes, it transpires, made their fortune out of the manufacture of a small article necessary to the comfort of all households. But what the small article is James does not divulge, for the information might distract attention from the business in hand. It is immaterial whether the money came from clothes-pins, saleratus, or shoe polish, so long as the money came. In contrast Bennett leaves nothing unsaid. If a character is engaged in the manufacture of earthenware, the flood gates are opened for a full account of the process from the crude clay—some of it local, some of it from Cornwall—through the ovens to finished dinner plates and teacups such as adorn the tables of London hotels and restaurants. If, as in the case of Edwin Clayhanger, the hero is a printer, the reader is told all about presses, those run by hand and those run by steam, how they are set up, the size of the beams necessary to support the floors where the machines are placed, how much everything costs, and how the accounts

are kept in the general office. Of the shop of John Baines we learn how the counters are arranged, where different articles are sold, how cloths are folded and unfolded and measured for customers, in what corners the clerks sit when there is nothing to do, where the main entrance is, how it is cluttered up with goods, how the windows are dressed and who shows most skill in dressing them, and so on to the words on the huge sign extending along the front. There must be a full description of the houses people live in, including the number and disposition of the rooms, doors, and windows, the style of the furniture, what the house cost, or what the rental is if the family does not own it, where the members usually sleep, sit, eat, and entertain their friends, what their amusements are, and what the lonesome wife or widow may see as she looks out over St. Luke's Square. Given also are the exact sites of the town hall with its once golden eagle, the shambles, public houses, and Methodist chapels; and the streets and alleys are all named, with infor-

mation about where they run into one another and where they stop. Over all is a bird's-eye view of the Five Towns, described as a black stain upon the fields and moors of Staffordshire, looking like an octopus spread along and across "the fifty-third parallel" of latitude. There is no breach or crack in the outer shell of circumstance within which people labor, cheat one another, love, and quarrel.

These details, it is admitted, will be of great value to the historian a century or two hence, who may wish to know about life in an industrial town back in the age of Queen Victoria. But, it is asked, what have they to do with a novel? It is, however, easy enough to see Bennett's drift. He was in reaction against the old narrow conception of the novel. Thackeray had said that the novelist was not expected to depict men *in* the actual business of life—in their offices and shops, but *out* of their business—"in their passions, loves, laughters, amusements, hatreds, and what not." He saw no way, he added, to develop "linen-drapery" or "apothecary-busi-

ness" in a novel. And from another angle, Stevenson had said: "Life is monstrous, infinite, illogical. . . . A work of art, in comparison, is neat, finite, self-contained, rational." Bennett seems to say: Let us see if we cannot bring fiction into the very business of life. So he casts aside the conventional framework of the novelist's art—its logic, nemesis, and so-called "significant incidents" or "crucial moments," all of which are artificial devices for making life much more simple than it really is. After all, as Hazlitt had remarked, our conduct is governed by the common occurrences of every day, which, though they once appeared trivial, assume significance in the long perspective of later years. Bennett's characters are placed in this long perspective. His masses of facts, statistics, and particulars, quite apart from the question of their relevancy in specific instances, are impressive when thus viewed as a whole. He accomplished his purpose, which was to throw over fiction the illusion of life as lived by ordinary men and women.

But his judgment sometimes failed him. Not often in "The Old Wives' Tale," which is nearly perfect in its kind. It is in the trilogy that he lost artistic control of his material. There should have been here only one instead of three novels. The subject warranted no more. Bennett came to the end of "Clayhanger" with several loose threads in the story; and instead of going back over his manuscript to gather them up he went on to write another novel, perhaps for commercial reasons. Only incidentally is "Hilda Lessways," as the author claimed for it, a re-telling of "Clayhanger" from the heroine's point of view. It is an appendix, in places literally repetitious, to explain Hilda's conduct where it was left mysterious. A few sentences here and there in "Clayhanger" would have made everything clear. "These Twain" is a second appendix, of five or six hundred pages of inordinate detail, depicting the altercations and antagonisms of husband and wife who set out with the idea that marriage is an institution in which each should try to get the

most out of the other and give as little as possible in return, only to discover after a thorough trial that there must be some sort of sentimental understanding to keep the hazardous adventure a going concern.

Bennett's novels are a record of what may be perceived, without much comment. In this respect he is like Homer, who does not stop to moralize. He adopts in places the mechanism of the psychological novel in that his characters are sometimes made to say to the reader what is held back from their associates, after the analogy of the dramatic aside and monologue. Their thoughts and emotions, however, lie close to the surface of the mind. Rarely do they reveal the depths. The author, one suspects, does not know what is going on below. One instance will suffice for illustration. Religion, his novels indicate, was a tremendous force among the people of the Five Towns. However much they may have misunderstood or perverted to their own interests the teachings of Christ, they found in them an ideal towards which they strove.

Bennett finely burlesques religious revivals, shows up hypocrites, and tells of the resentment of boys who are forced to sit in Sunday Schools when they want to be running in the fields. Beyond this Bennett never goes into the religious mentality of his men and women. In general, innumerable details concerning the behavior of his characters have little or no discernible psychological import. His method is in direct contrast with Dostoevsky's, in whose novels whatever is said or done is an avenue to an underworld of impulse and emotion.

Equally objective is Bennett's treatment of environment. Nothing is left out of the account. One may easily draw a map of the Five Towns from Bennett's descriptions of them. The characters, it is assumed, belong to that industrial area and to no other. Its hold upon them is irresistible. Edwin Clayhanger tries to break away from it but quickly gives up the struggle against immense odds. Hilda Lessways, after her sojourn at Brighton, returns and falls into the

old ways; and Sophia Baines, after spending the better part of her life in Paris, heeds the call of her sister to come back to contentment. But wherein lies the magnetic force of the unlovely Five Towns? Bennett never tells. One is aware always of Wessex working upon and moulding Tess of the d'Urbervilles or of the enchantment of the East creeping round Lord Jim. With Conrad and Hardy character and environment become, by an imaginative process, one. Neither quite exists apart from the other. If Bennett has this imaginative grasp, he fails to exert it, and so leaves with the reader the labor of correlating a multitude of disconnected facts and perceptions. Compared with Conrad and Hardy, his is a looser and, at the same time, a more impersonal art. Of all English novelists Bennett comes the nearest to sheer objectivity.

His perceptions are recorded in an exact time sequence. Dates are given of many events, and the age of everyone is known in every chapter as if he were writing chronicle

history. Time never moves backward as in Conrad; it is always going forward, bringing silently change to men and women and their institutions and at last bringing death. It is a slow movement like the passage of a ship across a distant horizon, "which moves but does not seem to move." Man we see entering and leaving the stages of his life, unaware or forgetful of the direction in which he is going. A multitude of details gives the effect of a long lapse of time between youth and middle life and old age. In the course of years, time, symbolizing the life of man, wears him down. In "The Old Wives' Tale" nearly everyone dies or is brought near to death. John Baines and his wife die, bringing to an end mid-Victorianism for Bursley; their daughters Constance and Sophia and their husbands, inaugurating a new era, die thirty years later. So generations wax and wane as inevitably as the moon. On the evening after the funeral of the last survivor of the second generation, Fossette, Sophia's infirm poodle, creeps up to her soup-plate in

the corner, sniffs at it, and walks away to lie down by the kitchen fire that she may warm her rheumatic legs once more. Thus the gates of the grave are kept wide open for man and beast.

Bennett's comment on death is as interesting for what it omits as for what it says. There is no moralizing on the brevity of life. There is no word about quick-coming death, the flicker of a match, the weaver's swift-moving shuttle, or a dream on a drift of smoke. These antique phrases would be inappropriate, for Bennett's characters all fulfil their humble destinies, in lives well drawn out. Neither is there insistence on the vanity of human life. The reader must decide for himself whether the lives of any of the characters are worth while as one generation treads upon the heels of another. Bennett's final summary of life is contained, I should say, in those few pages where Sophia, at the age of sixty, stands over the dead body of her husband whom she has not seen since he deserted her in their youth. She had always

pictured him as he was thirty-odd years ago, and she was shocked as she saw an emaciated old man lying dead before her. That he was a rascal who had wasted his life and wrecked her happiness seemed of no importance as she looked upon that distorted face. "What affected her was that he had once been young, and that he had grown old, and was now dead." Having always thought of herself as young also, she is startled as she glances towards a mirror and sees there "a tall forlorn woman . . . who had once exulted in abundant strength, and trodden proudly on the neck of circumstance, and now was old." That night Sophia had a paralytic stroke.

This is the story Bennett tells in the greatest of his novels. It is an old story, commonplace in its pathos, if you will, but re-told here with an impressiveness unmatched in English fiction since Thackeray; who, it will be remembered, confronted "the dim figure" of the Baroness Bernstein, as she lay dying at the age of eighty, with the portrait that Kneller had painted of her as Beatrix—the

girl of entrancing beauty who once came down the winding stairs into the great hall at Walcote, and blushed scarlet as she took the hands of her kinsman, Henry Esmond, while the old Viscount uttered a loud laugh. As here, death in bed, or on the field of honor, or on the Waterloo front was for Thackeray an incident in a dramatic action. The Baroness Bernstein, once lightly put out of the way, he went on with the more important business of his story. Bennett stops short with the death of his characters as the end of every man. There is no afterglow, as there was in George Eliot, of a world made better by ordinary men and women "who lived faithfully a hidden life and rest in unvisited tombs." In distinction, Bennett is a materialist in that he deals mainly with the outward aspects of material things, culminating in the fading away of the mind in senility and death. Here the book of life closes.

JOHN GALSWORTHY

## IV

## JOHN GALSWORTHY

"In almost every villa of England, 'The Forsyte Saga' may be seen. It is the one universally read novel, as no novel has been universally read since Stevenson." So writes Galsworthy's brother novelist, Hugh Walpole. Equally widespread is the Saga's appeal to a similar class of readers in the United States and the British Commonwealths. It has also been translated as a whole or in part for France, Germany, and other countries, East and West. Like the great English novels of the Victorian era, "The Forsyte Saga" may be destined to enter upon a lasting world fame.

Not to be disregarded (though this is not the subject of the present essay) are Galsworthy's brilliant succession of plays beginning with "The Silver Box" and culminating

in "Strife" and "Loyalties," which in conjunction with Bernard Shaw's plays lifted the English stage out of an unreal world into the realm of ideas. And there are clever aftermaths, like "The Roof" with its novel simultaneous scenes. "It might be said of Shaw's plays," Galsworthy has remarked, "that he creates characters who express feelings which they have not got. It might be said of mine, that I create characters who have feelings which they cannot express." The popular social drama which Galsworthy and Shaw displaced centered round "an erring wife" who, after no very alarming experiences with another man, was forced back at last into the arms of a husband whom she never loved—a thorough penitent, covering his head and shoulders with yellow, dishevelled hair. Rarely was the situation treated with a vestige of psychology. It was a washed-out survival of the Victorian Guinevere grovelling at the feet of a King Arthur. Perhaps Galsworthy has tied his plays too tightly into the social problems, ever

changing, of his time to last long. But the fact remains that with him human beings, as he believed they would act in modern environments, were once more restored to the stage.

Seldom do people now speak of Galsworthy's many novels outside the Saga. At first sight the reason for this neglect is not very clear, for the best of them are as good technically, and most of them are streaked with the same or related ideas. "A novelist," Galsworthy has written, "however observant of type and sensitive to shades of character, does little but describe and dissect that which lies within himself. The infinite variety in all of us, and especially in those of us predisposed to expression, has subtle kinship with almost every species of our fellow human beings." In this sense his novels, barring certain experiments before he had found himself, all hang together. They are an honest presentation of the world of men and women as he sees them. But when he leaves the Forsytes and runs up and down the social

scale in his other novels, he seems to be, though still well informed, less at home.

It could hardly be otherwise; for Galsworthy was born a Forsyte with a silver spoon in his mouth. His father descended from a long line of farmers, who had lived for generations in South Devon on the edge of the sea. Over the border in Dorset dwelt the imaginary Forsytes. Similarly, his mother belonged to a family long settled in Worcestershire, whose countryside is described in "The Freelands." Like the elder Forsytes, John Galsworthy, the Senior, migrated to London, where as lawyer and director in many companies he amassed a fortune, showed prudence in delaying marriage until he was well on in middle life, and then fixed his family at Coombe in Surrey, on "a little estate stretching down the side of a hill," with "walled gardens, pasture, corn-land, and coppice." He was fifty years old when his son John was born there. To the boy he was always an old man, alert in mind and body, still keeping up his London business at the

age of eighty. He was not a cut-and-dried Forsyte like James. He seems rather to have been, with some differences, the prototype in mind and body of the more liberal Old Jolyon. He had the Forsyte "chin and jaw" indicating "tenacity," and "the possessive instinct" was strong in him; but he had in a measure the artistic temperament also. He loved music, he loved painting, and he read poetry; and the beauty of the country was bred into his bones.

A son of this man whose life began and ended nearly with Queen Victoria's, John Galsworthy was sent to Harrow and on to Oxford, where he took honors in law, with a view to following in the footsteps of his father as a London solicitor. What he might have become is depicted in the character of Soames Forsyte who, after being exposed to a liberal education, entered upon the practice of the law. But Galsworthy, though admitted to the bar, almost immediately broke with his profession and set out on extensive travels which took him across the world. His first

long journey was made memorable by his falling in with Conrad, then chief officer of the *Torrens,* with whom he sailed from Australia to South Africa. Galsworthy's contact with many civilizations led him to question the whole range of the English social order as fixed in law and conventions by the Victorians. If a man is to become an author, he has several times said, a narrow selfhood must lose itself in the soul of the world. Galsworthy and Conrad, each in his own way, won their freedom of outlook in lands beyond the seas. Galsworthy was thereby saved from becoming a Soames Forsyte. Thenceforth all was not right with sea-girt Britain. Galsworthy had gained the critical attitude which, he has contended, is essential to the man of letters.

Out of his travels Galsworthy evoked a number of tales which showed scant promise that "John Sinjohn," the name under which he wrote, would ever become much of a novelist. Then, as he went on, he shifted his scene to the Tyrol, Monte Carlo, and the Devon-

shire of his ancestors, where he liked to write in an old farmhouse near the sea. It was his habit to take as subject a person whom he had somewhere closely observed, and then to imagine what the man's previous history may have been, without, of course, knowing what it really was. Occasionally he began to develop some constructive skill, but in the main he kept close to a loose narrative, which once he cast in the form of letters. "I was writing fiction," he says, "for five years before I could master even its primary technique."

Galsworthy's early experiments nevertheless have an interest if one wishes to see how he grew into his art. First in his mind then, as always, were his characters, who, though often but slightly sketched, were fitted into adventures appropriate enough to pass muster. From the outset he had a liking for "old fellows" like his father, whom he lets survey their lives in retrospect just before dying, when well on in the eighties or nineties. His own temperament was coloring his incidents with irony, which was as yet a mild sort of fatal-

ism. He already had, particularly in "Villa Rubein," the strife between the social classes, symbolized by the upper dog and the under dog, of whom the latter, though worsted in the fight, keeps his eyes, it is remarked, turned towards the heavens. Here appeared the spaniel endowed with almost human understanding, to run his course with other breeds through most of the subsequent novels; and here Galsworthy began to be troubled by the death of animals as later burlesqued by Max Beerbohm. Out of the kindness of his heart a fly, caught in a cobweb, must be disentangled before the spider can get him. Afterwards stray moths and wasps were to be handled gingerly and put out of doors. Above all else Galsworthy discovered in his first sketches Swithin Forsyte, his twin brother James, and their companions, the Treffreys. When he came to die, Swithin saw that he had missed everything in life but his investments and his champagne. The old man, full eighty years old, as he lies dreaming of the romance he once brushed aside, awakes for a moment,

clutches the wine-glass by his bedside and dies with his lips above the bubbles. This is the first faint vision of "The Forsyte Saga."

The tales by "John Sinjohn" are not exactly novels. In "Villa Rubein" and a romance called "Jocelyn," both moving through Continental scenes, Galsworthy had interesting situations, but in both instances he was unable to hold fast to them. Then came "The Island Pharisees" (1904), which is, psychologically considered, a story of the author's own enfranchisement. Like Galsworthy, Shelton, of the novel, has inherited all the social ideas of the comfortable middle class. The good citizen, as he has observed him, clings at all costs to his money, his wife, and his good name, keeping under cover such vices as he may have. For Shelton, whatever is, is right. His self-complacency is in no way disturbed by associations at Oxford, where Pharisees mostly congregate. Doubts about the social code with which he is expected to conform first arise after a journey round the world, when the young man is confronted by the conventions

attendant upon an engagement to marry a cold-blooded girl with "ice-blue eyes and brilliant smile." While thus ill at ease, he comes under the influence of Ferrand, a waif of modern civilization, without position in the world, dependent upon his ingenuity for clothes, lodging, dinner and cigarettes, whose maxim is that whatever is, is wrong. In the end Shelton is converted to the vagabond's philosophy of life and repudiates 'Antonia and all her ways. Whatever is, must be wrong.

"The Island Pharisees" is a general indictment of the British social order as seen through the "cynical blue eyes" of Ferrand. Nine-tenths of the men and women of the middle and upper classes, Galsworthy says in his preface to a revised edition of the novel, are Pharisees, whose morality consists in a strict adherence to the letter of outworn laws and antiquated ideas concerning education, marriage, the church, government, crime and its punishment, and the distribution of property. Without thought the Pharisees accept things as they are. As their fathers were, so they must be. On this formal basis rest their respect-

ability and their pride in being better than the other tenth of their compatriots who would adjust law and conduct to new social conditions and in the meantime are ready to take their chances with the Pharisees.

Galsworthy's first long novel is an introduction to all he has since written. Having discovered the Pharisees, he immediately proceeded to expose modern Phariseeism in its many phases, obvious and obscure, as peculiar to different social classes, much as Thackeray had once played with the snob idea, detecting the wolf and the ass in sheep's clothing through all ranks and all professions. In the process Galsworthy's art underwent a profound sea-change. Only two years intervene between "The Island Pharisees" and "A Man of Property" (1906); but in tone and manner the two novels are a world apart. Satire approaching cynicism passes into irony. A wandering narrative is subjected to artistic control. And the characterization, hitherto mostly on the surface, now shows psychological insight.

The novelist, one may say, has suddenly reached maturity. But to say that, is not a full

explanation. Wide as was his reading, Galsworthy in his first experimental stage followed a confusion of models, no one of which was very good. "The Island Pharisees" is in the outmoded picaresque tradition of the eighteenth century, a literary form which, though adequate to the delineation of a happy scoundrel like Ferrand, gave no scope to Galsworthy's analytic mind. A little late, perhaps, he fell in with Maupassant, Turgenev, and Tolstoi, of whom he made "an intensive study," the full effects of which are visible in "A Man of Property" and the novels that succeeded this masterpiece. From Maupassant came clearness and concision of expression, and sometimes a love of mere style, even the manipulation of words and phrases for sound and rhythm; and from Turgenev came strength, poise, ease and depth in character-drawing, with a poetic atmosphere over all. To these two great writers and to Tolstoi, we have Galsworthy's word for it, he owed his "inspiration and training." Though the breadth of Tolstoi was beyond him, there never would

have been a "Forsyte Saga" had no "War and Peace" gone before, greatly as the two differ in subject, movement, and scope.

As Galsworthy's art was maturing, he became more tolerant in spirit. Phariseeism was still his game, but phylacteries and blue ribbons were no longer torn off with the unconsidered glee of a Ferrand. Hypocrisy and insincerity were submerged in a more psychological conception of Phariseeism, as lurking somewhere in the unconscious mind. Most of us, Galsworthy concluded, are Pharisees, without knowing it, in our pretence to be other than we are. Phariseeism is a blind spot which no one can see in himself unless he has an "ironic eye" which he can turn inwards. It is this blind spot in a character that he would expose to view, not so much for condemnation as for enlightenment and humor. His moral attitude towards Phariseeism is thus very like Fielding's, which may be summed up in an observation by Anatole France: "L'excès est toujours un mal."

"Each section of society," Galsworthy re-

marks, "has its doom, the negative, so to speak, of its virtues." The Victorian Forsytes, as Galsworthy knew them in his youth, have those admirable qualities of business and professional men which stabilize society. They are honest. They meet all their commercial and social obligations promptly. They hold together their families as well as they are able. They are solicitous of the welfare of their children. Their prime weakness is an excessive love of property, which keeps out of their vision all spiritual and æsthetic values. The quality of a man's character is commensurate with the quality of his investments. For them right and justice are defined by the laws of the realm. Outside their own clan they have no interests. They are without charity for the unfortunate. When labor fails, they let the masses starve. Self-satisfied, they have no humor and so never see themselves as they are. Out of their blindness will come their eventual doom.

In direct contrast are the Dallisons, of "Fraternity," representative of the extreme artistic

temperament, in whom are reversed all the characteristics of the Forsytes. Having inherited comfortable fortunes, the Dallisons make no attempt to add to their property. Their family ties, though rarely quite broken, are rather elastic as between husband and wife. The web of their lives, however, is as closely woven as the Forsytes' in class consciousness. Made aware of the submerged tenth by the intrusion of a beautiful Madonna of the slums into their lives, they play with the idea of universal brotherhood, but they never get beyond vague artistic dreams. In their fastidiousness, says Galsworthy, lies their doom.

Not so well known as they deserve are Galsworthy's country gentlemen, such as the Forsytes and even the Dallisons might have become had they never been drawn into a metropolitan atmosphere. His country gentlemen do not care to add to their estates so much as to preserve intact what they have received from their ancestors, as a sacred trust to be handed on to their descendants. Land, tenants, and laborers they regard as theirs to do what

they please with. What upsets them is the invasion of industrialism, bringing strikes not only in factories but in the fields. As a class, they are obstinate, intolerant, and impervious to new ideas. Mr. Horace Pendyce, of "The Country House," who claimed descent on one side from Richard the Third and on the other from the Cornish giants, holds that there can be no real safety but in the past. Sir Gerald Malloring, of "The Freelands," abetted by his wife, meddles with all the private affairs of the souls whom God has entrusted to his care. It is his duty to enforce on them his own inherited "high principles." If there are rumors that a girl is "not quite nice" she must be driven from the village, though as a result of the edict a family may be ruined. If a laborer marries his deceased wife's sister, he must be evicted under circumstances so distressing that they lead to suicide. Out of an exalted sense of duty, the Mallorings lose every trace of humanity. Neither they nor the Pendyces ever see the black spots on their characters.

A similar story is told of the aristocracy in

"The Patrician," on whom fits even more tightly the straightjacket of tradition. The bluest of the blue bloods, the Carádocs throw back to the Middle Ages. Through the centuries the family has become thoroughly dried up. All that is left of them is their conscience, which is nothing more than the cruel application of mediæval codes to the twentieth century. Uppermost in their minds is a desire to rule the nation. Without one or another of them in Parliament the country, they are certain, would go down into ruin. But as a matter of fact it is ruin that awaits the Carádocs. Already their hard systems are disintegrating. If here and there they win in their resistance against modern civilization, the victory is but temporary. For the Carádocs as well as for the Pendyces and the Mallorings the handwriting on the wall, which their eyes cannot read, foretells a doom that will not be long delayed.

Galsworthy has described his novels, in Matthew Arnold's phrase, as "a criticism of life." One British institution after another

passes in review as in a panorama, and a knife is put into each picture. Interspersed in the panorama are plans, schemes, and theories, soberly or humorously set forth, for the regeneration of mankind—pure democracy, socialism, universal brotherhood, a shift in the population from town to country, or emigration to the colonies. These, too, receive the knife as the author proceeds not far from the middle of the road but nearer the side of critics and reformers. Not a revolutionist, Galsworthy's aim is nowhere the complete overthrow of the existing social order, but the elimination of grievous faults in the machine while holding fast to what is good in the principles governing the aristocracy and the middle classes. He would release all classes from the prison house of caste. Often he attacks the laws and conventions respecting marriage and divorce which compel the maintenance of conjugal relations after love has gone. When society can thus command how one shall conduct himself in his private affairs, then trouble begins.

Certain of his novels, such as "The Dark

Flower," "Beyond," and "Saint's Progress," deal specifically with sex—from essentially Hardy's point of view in "Jude the Obscure," but with less insistence on its physical aspects and more on "the atmosphere and psychology of the passion," for one may trust, Galsworthy remarks ironically, to "the puritanic Anglo-Saxons" to fill in the details. Taken as a whole, there is little or no direct propaganda in Galsworthy's novels. Such as seems to be is inherent in his naturalistic method which endeavors to transfer to fiction the social scene as it appears to a man who would look beneath the surface. Nor are problems solved in the authoritative manner of H. G. Wells. They are stated and elaborated, and left there for the reader's solution if he has any. Galsworthy's theme is the liberation of the mind. The nearest approach to his ideal of emancipation is the artist, who at least has imagination, while the aristocrat, the priest, and the man of affairs have none. Man is to be saved through art. God, in his freedom to build his own way, is the supreme artist.

For Galsworthy the artist all roads lead to

the world of the Forsytes, which was his early home. In their Saga are most of the ideas lying at the basis of his other novels, here massed and concentered in an abnormal "sense of property" as the central and dominating theme. With a slightly superior air Galsworthy looks back in irony on ways of life he has outgrown. As he fits scene after scene into his patterns, commenting, satirizing, and looking beneath the surface, there are times when he appears to feel that he is thrusting a knife into himself, well knowing that the Forsyte in his subconscious self is still alive, moving and mumbling. One of these Devonshire farmers to whom Galsworthy was spiritually akin, learned the builder's trade, and migrated, as has been related, to London, where there were more houses to build than down by the sea. He begat ten children, whence sprang a body of merchants, lawyers, and stock-brokers, representatives of well-to-do London. As portrayed in "The Man of Property" these children were by 1886 well on in the seventies, eighties, or nineties. Old Jolyon

had made his money in tea and in coal in companies in which he was a partner or director. Swithin had been an auctioneer and land agent. His twin brother James was a solicitor who managed large estates eventually. Nicholas went into gold mining, Roger bought and sold houses. Timothy amassed a fortune as publisher of religious books, and, being the most conservative of the Forsytes, put it all into Consols. Together with their sisters, married and unmarried, the Forsytes formed a close corporation for the promotion of the family's material welfare.

These old Forsytes as they once existed in the flesh are the very people who entered largely into the novels of Dickens and Thackeray. They fill "Vanity Fair." They belong to that new and prosperous middle class (called the upper middle class) of bankers and merchants who came in with industrialism. They were hated by Dickens, for by his time they had already crowded to the wall the lower middle class of clerks and small shopkeepers to which his father belonged. As de-

picted by the caricaturist they were mostly hypocrites, sharp and dishonest in business, and heartless in the treatment of small rivals, whom they forced into bankruptcy and the debtor's prison. Indicative of their character, they have great bloated red faces, on whose foreheads stand out conspicuously a network of swollen blue veins. Into this new middle class which Dickens inundated with vituperation it so happened that Thackeray was born. He used to say, however, that his residence at Cambridge University, brief though it was, fixed his caste; that is, it brought him into the company of cultivated minds for the rest of his life. Thus, like Galsworthy after him, Thackeray gained an outside point of view, where he could stand and look at the men and women of his own class, for whom, again like Galsworthy, he never lost his love. With little gall on his pen, he treated them humorously, unmasking mild hypocrisies for the amusement of his readers. Their worship of wealth he passed over lightly, as it was familiar to his readers. What impressed him most was their

snobbery, which he defined as "the mean admiration of mean things." Their eyes are always turned upward to the leisure class above them. Instead of continuing in the mercantile footsteps of their fathers, their sons must get commissions in the Horse Guards at the risk of being shot through the heart on the field of Waterloo. And their daughters, no longer expected to become housewives, must attend the most fashionable boarding schools and become acquainted with the great dictionary of the great Dr. Johnson. If any one of them is taken up by a member of the aristocracy, however disreputable, then the whole family is happy. Such were the Victorian Forsytes as seen by two master novelists who lived among them.

Dickens and Thackeray saw the Forsytes in the full flush of manhood when they were making their money in straight or devious ways. Wealth was the ladder up which they were striving to climb. Their foothold not yet safe, they were suffering from an inferiority complex. When Galsworthy saw these men they were living on and on into old age with

death still apparently far off. Except that one or another may cling to a directorship in some company, they have all retired from business and safely invested their large fortunes. The battle of life is over. They live at ease in large houses in the midst of heavy and ugly furniture. They pay formal visits to all members of the family; some of them take a daily drive out into the suburbs; they dine at home or at their clubs on mutton and champagne (occasionally it is Madeira) and conclude with a favorite cigar. On the top of the ladder they now sit, thoroughly content with themselves. The old sense of inferiority has given place to the superiority complex of the Pharisee. They throw up their noses and sniff in contempt or suspicion of all outside their clan.

Outwardly the old Forsytes are not all cast in the same mould. Of the twins, James and Swithin, both over six feet in height, one is lean and the other is fat. On one marriage has done its work and on the other celibacy. Differences like these, however, merely play over

the surface of fundamental resemblances. They all have the strong jaw. Their tenacity is of a kind that never lets go. They are highly vitalized. At the same time they take excellent care of the family constitution, that it may not be put to undue strain. When they come to die at last, the end is rather unexpected. There is very little if any genuine affection among them. Strange dislikes arise between brothers and sisters, "secret hostilities" even. They are nevertheless all held together by ties of blood which no circumstance can loosen. They observe with proper dignity all the family festivals—births, betrothals, marriages, and funerals. No member of the family can do anything without its becoming known to all the rest through subterranean passages. Scandals pass that way in whispers, never to be told aloud, out of regard to decency. And yet no member of the family knows just how he stands with the rest. James, who is deaf, complains that no one ever tells him anything. Nor does any one know how much his brothers are worth. That is a secret to be revealed

as a surprise when the man dies. So the Forsytes speculate over whether the palm is to go to James or Jolyon or Timothy. Soames, the young solicitor, could tell them, but whenever there is an approach to the subject he keeps his mouth tight and stares. Their minds thus never move far from property and the rights inherent in property. If a child of the family gives a beggar a bad penny, knowing it to be bad, the face of his father brightens up under the assurance that his fortune is likely to descend into safe hands. It was for this purpose that he begat a son. No Forsyte treasures are laid up in heaven; they are all of this earth that the family may live on through succeeding generations with no abatement in a man's rights to do what he pleases with his property and his wife and his children. God is Mammon.

Cries of rebellion against Forsyteism were already filling the air. They were heard in Hardy's novels and in scores of other books in the 'nineties, which startled half England out of moral creeds which had been held sacred

since the advent of Queen Victoria, and which had not been seriously questioned by either Dickens or Thackeray, who, though they attacked particular abuses, were content for the most part to play humorously over inconsistencies in human behavior within the existing circle of law and order. Well within that best of all possible worlds the elder Forsytes lived and moved, with the exception of Old Jolyon, who sometimes broke through under the influence of emotions which he tried to conceal from his brothers and sisters. Not until the next generation did any other Forsyte show signs of being ill at ease in Zion. Young Jolyon and Soames, caught in the flux of an oncoming age, are in different degrees introspective. Science has touched them. Social ideas are no longer stable; they are an evolution through changes under a progressive impulse. Art also intrudes. Soames collects pictures. Jolyon paints watercolors, and defies the family's very sensitive code relative to sex. Neither of them, however, is strong enough to break permanently with Zion.

Their interest in art, genuine enough so far as it goes, is half of it commercial. Jolyon while painting portraits has his mind on what they will bring in the market. Soames, a shrewd stock-broker, buys only those pictures which he hopes to sell at a handsome profit. Eventually Jolyon returns to the family fold and regains his respectability. Soames, who never strays far, settles back as preëminently the man of property, becoming more insistent on the rights of ownership than his ancestors, and yet regarding himself as a liberal in social ideas. Less self-conscious than Jolyon, who is amused by the vestiges of Forsyteism he discovers in his own outlook, Soames never sees himself as he appears to others; he knows that something is the matter with him but he is blind to what it is. The riddle of his nature he cannot read.

Out of this man's character was destined to proceed the tragi-comedy of "The Forsyte Saga" with reverberations throughout an environment which he attempted to subject to his will. It was written in the beginning that

after partial success he should meet disaster. Fate first lifted her head when Soames saw at a musical tea, which bored him, a girl of exotic beauty, in complete black (she was in mourning for her father) standing alone some distance from him. As he stepped towards her for an introduction, her perfect grace and her golden hair in strange contrast with dark brown eyes and pallid neck and shoulders, gave to his senses that peculiar satisfaction "which novelists and old ladies call love at first sight." Soames was then twenty-six years old. Irene was but eighteen. He repeatedly proposed to her and she repeatedly rejected him out of an instinctive feeling of aversion for the sleek, trim solicitor. At length, pressed beyond her power of resistance, she accepted him on the condition that if the marriage did not thrive he would set her free. The marriage did not thrive. No children were born.

There was nothing in common between the girl who loved art for its own sake and the young man who bought pictures in order to sell them. When not under constraint Irene

always acted upon the natural impulse of the moment, taking joy in whatever she did. Soames was secretive, always brooding over something she could not at once divine; there was nothing spontaneous about him; everything was premeditated. If he gave her expensive dresses and a five-pointed star of diamonds to be placed in the lace of her bosom, it was because any heightening of her beauty made a stronger appeal to his senses or because he wished to display to his friends a more beautiful wife than any of theirs. It did not take Irene long to see that she was to Soames much like a portrait by one of the masters in his gallery, to be owned, body and soul. She was an investment. That possession might remain secure, he built a house for her in the country where he could have her alone. Then Bosinney, the architect, who was engaged to marry June, a daughter of Young Jolyon, entered the intimate scene. Irene and Bosinney fell in love. When Irene asked Soames to fulfil his promise of freedom, his response was a shameful attack upon her in assertion of his

conjugal rights under the law. It was found to be dangerous business to resist the will of a Forsyte. For Bosinney the entanglement meant death; for Irene it meant a wound which at the time seemed worse than death. And yet the victory is not all on one side. "What shall it profit a man if he gains his own soul and loses thereby his property" was a saying lightly tossed about among the Forsytes. When Irene, a phantom of beauty, passes out of "The Man of Property," Soames has not merely lost his most valuable possession; he is doomed to memories that haunt him to the end through all the circumstances of his life. By the dead body of Bosinney, Soames stood for a moment "white and still" and then "crept noiselessly away," a lost soul. Yet alive he went down into hell. Irene kept her soul and awaited the ultimate issue.

"The Man of Property" is a dramatic presentation of the clash between two antagonistic groups of social ideas such as Galsworthy invariably has in his mature novels and in the plays he was soon to write. Here the antago-

nisms, labelled Forsytean and artistic, are brought together in close quarters under one roof, where there is no escape for either except in an explosion. In form and movement the novel is an expanded Greek tragedy, cleverly adapted to modern views and modern conditions, wherein Fate with a grin on her face loses the glamour of divinity in the forces underlying that ensemble of conventions called society. Emotional undercurrents, as they collide, recede, and collide again, are revealed with little psychological phrasing in an objective art which often becomes very subtle. No one can doubt what is going on in the minds of Soames, Irene, June, and Bosinney, as in one of the early scenes of the novel they sit round a dinner table. Scraps of speech, pauses, echoes, and silences tell the story of a tension fraught with the greatest danger to these four. Everywhere the texture is tightly woven, giving one the illusion that Galsworthy had already determined what was to be the fate of the characters involved in the dramatic action, and had in mind, too, the

ironic train of events which were at last to catch fire. His irony and his silences sometimes remind one of Sophocles.

In one respect Galsworthy may have been mistaken. It is not quite clear why Bosinney should have been thrown out dead. That he was of an extreme artistic temperament, is not sufficient warrant for sending the distracted architect into the fog of a crowded London street to be run over and killed. It was an accident. There is, Schiller once remarked, a happy use of chance in a dramatic action. Such a happy use is exemplified in Conrad's "Chance," where Fortune so well veils her face that, but for the title of the novel, it might be guessed that she was Fate. For some reason Galsworthy wished to take Bosinney out of Irene's life and let her recede into the shadows of mystery. He thought of suicide or an accident, and chose an accident. A character, not yet fully developed, was sacrificed to a rigid pattern. His technique here, I say it with hesitancy, failed him.

"The Man of Property" was an artistic

whole—in no need of a continuation. Some think that it would have been better had Galsworthy left the novel without engraftments. Still, it was almost inevitable that he should speculate on what happened afterwards to those men and women who had lives before them when the curtain fell. Of the ten children of the first Forsyte to settle in London, only two were dead. Susan, to the horror of her family, had been cremated at the age of seventy-four, in accordance with her last will and testament. Swithin, as has been related, overstrained the muscles of his heart in reaching for a glass of champagne, and had died at the age of eighty. But what about their eight brothers and sisters? And what about Soames, Young Jolyon, and Irene, and a score of others who were coming upon the scene?

Twelve years lapsed before Galsworthy waked the Forsytes out of the silence in which he had left them. In the interval he wrote his novels of country life and won recognition as one of the two dramatists who saw and understood best the social drift of the period. His

return to his old theme came quietly with "Indian Summer of a Forsyte" (1918), depicting in the most beautiful short story he has yet written, the last months of Old Jolyon at Robin Hill. Thereupon followed "In Chancery," an interlude called "Awakening," and "To Let," which with "The Man of Property" he published together in 1922 as "The Forsyte Saga," a title which he had originally intended for "The Man of Property" but had discarded as inappropriate for a single novel. A fortnight later appeared "Loyalties." Galsworthy, novelist and dramatist, was at the height of his fame.

Galsworthy's artistic procedure altered materially. Reduced to the lowest terms, "The Man of Property" is a study of what will happen in a particular *milieu* when a wife has an aversion for her husband which she cannot overcome. The novel is primarily an emotional study in the physiology of nerves. Had Soames and Irene consulted a competent psychiatrist on their difficulties, there might have been nothing to write about. The suc-

ceeding novels, with the exception of "Indian Summer of a Forsyte," are more objective. Somewhat as in the realistic Icelandic sagas, which abound in disputes, quarrels, and feuds over property rights, Galsworthy aims to give a rather full history of a family in these modern times, void of ancient heroisms. He dips down into the Devonshire Forsytes, adding a genealogical table for the guidance of readers who might otherwise go astray in a descent which he deems essential to a proper understanding of the family's hereditary characteristics. Twelve years further away from the Forsytes of his youth, he now assumes a reminiscent attitude towards them and their children, as if he were visiting the past. Though the story he has to tell has dramatic climaxes in immediate and later effects of the South African War upon Forsyteism and in the social upheaval of the World War, drama is largely subdued to narrative.

The grin on the face of Fate has grown broader. The old Forsytes meet death most appropriately and hand on their estates to

their heirs. Irene, after supporting herself for some years in teaching music to children, gives Soames the grounds he desires for divorce, marries Young Jolyon, whose second wife has died, and settles with him at Robin Hill in the house Soames had built for her long ago. She bears her husband a son Jon. Soames marries the daughter of a Frenchwoman, who keeps a Soho restaurant, and obtains an heir, though greatly disappointed because Fleur is not a son. Jon and Fleur grow up, and fall desperately in love on a chance acquaintance, not knowing of the former marital history of Irene and Soames. Necessarily they are kept apart. Had Galsworthy's irony gone so far as to let them marry, he would have had on his hands a situation most difficult to manage and quite out of harmony with his general design. So Fleur marries another, and Jon with his mother (his father dying at the age of seventy-two) emigrates to British Columbia. Later Jon turns up in South Carolina, where he grows peaches and marries an American girl, preliminary to

going back to England as a country gentleman. Val, a grandson of James, has already married Holly, a daughter of Young Jolyon by his second wife, and settled on a farm on the Downs. Thus in the third generation the Forsytes show signs of returning to the land of their forefathers, completing the family cycle.

These are the threads in a design rich in humorous details for depicting the course that Forsyteism ran between 1886 and 1920. Social ideas changed; manners changed; morals changed. Several members of the first generation moved, more or less, with the times. "Four-in-hand Swithin," who drank his last glass of champagne in 1891, by no means confined himself to the acquisition of property. Old Jolyon, who died a few months later in his eighty-sixth year, came to put beauty and upright conduct before property. He utterly repudiated Soames for his treatment of Irene, and left her £15,000 in his will. He deserted the gloomy family vault at Highgate and was buried at Robin Hill, where he had died sit-

ting under a great oak while listening for the footsteps of Irene across "the sunlit lawn." And three years after him his sister Susan escaped dissolution in the family's damp mausoleum by being cremated so that no one knew, the family complained, where she might be. The mild scandal caused by these burials was silenced by Euphemia, the daughter of Old Roger, with the retort: "Well, I think people have a right to their own bodies, even when they're dead." Her remark, though it puzzled the cut-and-dried Forsytes, meant a recognition in the family of personal liberty, such, for instance, as Irene had insisted upon.

It would, nevertheless, be a mistake to infer that the Forsyte sense of property then or ever waned in strength. The children and the grandchildren have the family's bone configuration of face with the protruding jaw. Young and old cling as long as they can to whatever comes within their grasp. But "the central point of possession" shifts under changing social conditions from others to oneself. The Forsytes now desire not so much to

own the souls of wife, husband, children, and everybody else as to own their own souls. They no longer amass fortunes for the benefit of descendants. They no longer care to live after they are dead. They want to live while they live and for themselves alone. The birth-rate drops. No more families of ten children. One child is enough. There must be money for clubs, motor-cars, travel, and a thousand luxuries. Why the expense of children? Why fuss about the affair between Young Jolyon and Irene? They were in love and did the perfectly obvious thing. Why not be married, if one wishes, first by nature and afterwards by law? Why not secret marriages if one prefers them? Marriage and divorce are only incidents anyway, of which it is expected that there will be three or four in a life before the age of forty. "Why," June asks during the South African War, "can't we leave the Boers alone? They only want their independence, and why shouldn't they have it?" "Because," Soames replies with a sneer, "they happen to have agreed to our suzerainty." "Suzerainty!"

retorts June scornfully, "We shouldn't like anyone's suzerainty over us." So passed the legalistic individualism of the Victorian era into the individual liberty of the new century.

Amid all the changes that were sweeping over England one pure individualist still lived on like a winter fly in a mid-Victorian house out on the Bayswater Road. Timothy as a boy had stood by at the coronation of Queen Victoria, had made a fortune by the time the Prince Consort died, and had since dwelt in seclusion while his investments kept growing until he became the richest of the Old Forsytes. After reaching the age of ninety he fell into senility and rarely left his room, where, when not sleeping, or relishing a baked apple, he passed his time in walking between bed and window and reading over every morning his last will and testament. Through the World War he lived, but as he was very deaf and newspapers were kept from him, he never heard the boom of air raids or read the stories of slaughter. Nothing had happened to trouble him since the Boer War when Con-

sols went down. He was in his hundred and first year when he died in 1920 and his body was deposited in the ugly tomb at Highgate. No Forsyte but Soames attended the funeral; all the rest were uninterested, for they well knew that none of his estate would come to them. In one of his lucid intervals it had been intimated to him that the family admired his "character" above all else and he had snapped back, "Nobody wants my character." Except for a legacy of a thousand pounds to Soames, the family received, as they professed to desire, only his character. His property was placed in trust for the last male lineal descendant of his father and mother—a hundred or more years hence. With the death of Timothy the last of the old pillars that had supported the Victorian social order and had profited by it lay broken. Only Soames, somewhat bent to the new times, still stood among the ruins.

Family history, however, may go on, undisturbed by the extinction of a generation, so long as the chronicler can provide children.

Though the ten Forsytes who came into the world with Queen Victoria were now in their graves, there remained a scattered group of their children born midway in her Majesty's reign. In the first two novels of "The Forsyte Saga," the second generation was projected against fathers, uncles, and aunts for contrast in manners, morals, and religion, which were gradually undermining the old social fabric. But in "To Let," the scene began to fill with a third generation, who were similarly projected against the later Victorians for whom stood Soames and Young Jolyon. The way now lay open, if the author wished to take it, to explore further the generation which came to maturity immediately after the World War. "To Let" may be regarded as a transition to "A Modern Comedy," comprising "The White Monkey," "The Silver Spoon," and "Swan Song," with two interludes, "A Silent Wooing" and "Passers By." Each novel of the trilogy is exactly dated. The years are 1922, 1924, and 1926, when unemployment, a Labour Government, and the General Strike

were questions uppermost in the minds of a restive public.

More closely than any of Galsworthy's other novels, these three cling to the contemporary scene. The mood is comedic, with only faint streaks of tragedy until the closing scene. Manners are caught as they run, looked over, and let go in pursuit of further game. The background gradually shrinks. Already Young Jolyon's weak heart has ceased to beat. George, the sportsman and jester of the family, drops his cigar as he falls into a coma and dies at the age of sixty-six, leaving most of what was left of his dissipated fortune to his mistress. Irene grows dim in her widowhood and at last becomes for Soames no more than a transient vision out of the past as unobserved he watches her seated at the piano in a Washington hotel, playing the same music that entranced him in youth. Soames was then seventy years old, and Irene was nearly sixty-two, with the gold of her hair all turned into gray, and yet as wonderful in her beauty as when he first saw her in a Bournemouth drawing room.

Her face, a little worn, made her eyes look darker than of old under those eyebrows that still retained their darkness. Never quite a human being, Irene fades out of the book into the spirit of immortal beauty. In place of the neo-Victorians who make their exits with her and the rest, Galsworthy creates another set of the same age, of whom Sir Lawrence Mont, the father of Fleur's husband, has most to say. The new characters of the elder generation are, however, hardly more than sketches. And of the old set who live on for a while, even Soames is drained of half his blood in passing into "A Modern Comedy," where, the World War being over, he takes out his top hat and learns to smoke and play golf. He loses control of the drama playing about him, forced to watch it from the outside. His place is taken by Fleur, into whose mouth he put a silver spoon at birth.

The ironic mood of the new age in which Fleur plays her part is symbolized by a Chinese picture of a white monkey which Uncle George somewhere purchased and hung over

the fireplace in his bedroom, where it faced him when he took his last sleep. After the death of George, Soames bid in the picture at auction and gave it to Fleur to adorn her Chinese room, as a fit companion to Ting-a-ling, her Chinese dog. In a gray ghastly background splashed with bright colors sits the white monkey looking with strange, haunting eyes at a squeezed-out orange which it holds in a curled-up paw, while all round lie the rinds of fruit which have been sucked dry. "Eat the fruits of life," the picture seems to say, "chuck the rinds, and ask your eyes what it is all about."

All who look upon the white monkey see in it the disillusionment which succeeded the World War. The old faiths, principles, and moralities which, the elder Forsytes had assumed, would endure forever, have gone down in the wreck. Nothing can last. Everything is in flux. The late Victorians who survive in their top hats, though treated with tolerance, meet scant respect. Soames and Sir Lawrence Mont are now proper subjects for a museum.

Fleur and her friends must always be doing something. When they sit in their chairs, they must keep lifting their feet up and down, without getting anywhere. They will have what they want and do what they please despite fathers and fathers-in-law, whose main function is to supply them with money or to come to their rescue when they are caught in the net of antiquated laws. No husband or wife longer asks questions of the other. That would be an impertinence to be resented. Conjugal rights with all other rights go by the board. Impulse rules. It is an egocentric world. No one should manifest consideration for the welfare of others. Pity is another name for sentimentalism. Everybody should appear to be "hard-boiled." Cynicism becomes a fashion. "Who cares," says Fleur, "what one is? It's what one is labelled." And yet nobody is satisfied. Though Fleur gets Michael for a husband and Jon for one night, she wants something else—but just what it is she doesn't know. She is like the white monkey whose eyes are a little sad and angry as it looks upon

the scattered rinds, as if wondering whether there may not be more in life than the refuse lying at one's feet. Even Marjorie Ferrar, who, outdoing Fleur, flaunts the creed, "Take life in both hands and eat it," sometimes has "shivers," which she calls "brain-waves," as she lies awake and alone at night.

It is an era of fads and fancies which succeed one another in the endless forms and colors of a kaleidoscope. Soames looks on, bewildered, at times grieved, by the restless behavior of his family and their associates but accepts the situation without too much ado, wisely spending more time in the country and letting the world go by. Only mildly does he interfere with the flirtations of his wife; for she has given him an heir for his money, which Irene had refused to do, and there are no further rights that he can reasonably claim. When Annette takes to an absurd thing called Coué, he is rather pleased, for it puts her to sleep at night. Fleur, who shingles her hair and walks in a curve, may go her own way provided she does not go too far. Such influ-

ence as he can exert over her is by gentle persuasion. After she gives birth to a son and heir to the family's property nothing matters more. She has proved herself a true Forsyte, to be protected in the courts against the slanders of Marjorie Ferrar and to be taken on a trip round the world. As he had collected pictures, so she may throw open her house, without remonstrance, to the derelicts of all nations, under the delusion that she can revive interest in Kipling's discredited British Empire, which never took any sentimental hold upon himself in the old days. When his son-in-law enters parliament and in his first speech advocates a wild scheme for doing away with unemployment by sending out into the colonies every year a hundred thousand children between the ages of fourteen and eighteen that they may increase the demand for English goods, Soames merely smiles and enquires whether fathers and mothers might not object to a separation from their sons and daughters for the benefit of the British Empire.

What, Soames wonders, is this subconscious

mind we hear so much about? What are complexes? What is this thing called psychoanalysis which attributes what a man does, not to his principles or to what he ate for breakfast, as in the good old days, but to some shock he received in childhood and has clean forgotten? Why vitamins? The average age of the old Forsytes, who ate what they liked, now and then complaining of their livers, was close on to ninety when they died. Why should a man have his teeth, upper and lower, all pulled out if he has a lame knee? Why Coué? James and Swithin and Old Jolyon, though sometimes depressed like everybody else, kept their heads as long as they lived. Why spiritualistic séances? Isn't immortality assured by the Church of England? What is meant by an æsthetic approach to literature without moral prejudice? Wherein lies the æsthetics of physical and clinical details in fiction? And what about this expressionism in painting and sculpture which says that the inside only is important and leaves the outside to shift for itself? And what is meant by the restoration

of English music by giving it "a wide and spacious freedom from melody and rhythm, while investing it with literary and mathematical charms"? Questions somewhat like these ran through the mind of the neo-Victorian. From all the modern fads and the new art, Soames turned backwards to his own times. Once he visited the United States, where neither skyscrapers nor the waters of Niagara took so great a hold upon him as the Saint-Gaudens memorial in Rock Creek Cemetery, outside Washington. "That great greenish-bronze figure of seated woman within the hooding folds of her ample cloak," Galsworthy remarks, "seemed to carry him down to the bottom of his own soul." As he rose from the crescent seat he crossed over to the figure and just touched a fold in the green bronze, regretting, I rather think, that he could not take the statue home with him and add it to the gallery at Mapledurham.

But death awaited Soames on his return home. In rescuing Fleur from a picture dropped from an upper window in a fire at

Mapledurham, he was himself hit and mortally wounded. He was but in his seventy-second year. He had expected to match Timothy's century of years. Great funerals had gone out of fashion. Soames was buried in the corner of a country churchyard under a crab-apple tree. To Fleur, whose cigarette caused the fire, Soames remained beautifully attached. Over the irony of his fate Galsworthy has remarked: "However far we have travelled from Greek culture and philosophy, there is still truth in the old Greek proverb: 'That which a man most loves shall in the end destroy him.'"

This is the end of the history of a family covering a period of forty years from 1886 to 1926. The old and the middle Victorians have retired to the shades. The Edwardians are still young. Social, political, and moral ideas, regarded in the beginning as immutable, have nearly all been cancelled in the progression of years. The one constant in the world has proved to be everlasting change. The "possessive instinct," still persisting, has taken on, as

we have seen, new forms. The young Forsytes, careless of property in the old sense, still retain the family's avid eyes and protruding chin. They will take from others all they can get. Still, when the curtain drops, Fleur and Jon are rather sobered by the consequences of their acts. They have doubts of the new morality. Less self-centered, they display zeal for the welfare of England. In the General Strike Fleur runs a canteen and Jon drives a locomotive engine. In them and the rest of the family reappears the old Forsyte grit directed towards larger issues. And what of Fleur and Jon and their cousins in the world which is now upon us? That is another story for Galsworthy to tell. In the meantime he has filled in spaces in the older parts of the Saga with a number of exquisite interludes called altogether "On Forsyte Change."

HERBERT GEORGE WELLS

# V

## HERBERT GEORGE WELLS

LIKE Dickens before him, Wells was born a cockney whom nature endowed with that persistent curiosity which may foreshadow genius. Curious to know life, curious to know what there was in books of all sorts, he observed everything that was going on about him and read everything he could lay hands on, except the novels of Sir Walter Scott, "which bored him indescribably." There was a tremendous drive in the boy who first jumped the counter of a draper's shop and then jumped a grammar school on winning a scholarship at the Royal College of Science at South Kensington. Living in town on a guinea a week, he studied under Huxley, and in due time took the B.S. degree at London University with first-class honors in zoölogy. It was throughout a desperate strug-

gle with circumstance which again and again threatened to overwhelm him and send him back to the dismal routine of a draper's assistant.

The drive within him would not let him settle down to the quiet life of a schoolmaster. His mind was moving all the time towards literature as a profession. "An overpowering need to know" was associated with an overpowering desire to tell what he knew or dreamed. To the majority the world of men and women appears as more or less static. To Wells, who has described himself as "a child of change," the world is always in flux, as had been said by Heraclitus, from whom he took the motto of "The World of William Clissold." Very early he put to himself such questions as whence came it all? In what direction is it now moving? And where will "the discomfort of humanity" ever find rest? To these and other questions that have perplexed mankind, he had prompt answers, serious or humorous. For more than thirty years, he has let his imagination play over the

entire modern spectacle, at the same time reviving the past or looking into the future. It has been a wonderful display of fireworks.

Significant is the fact that Wells came to fiction through science instead of the ancient classics or history or philosophy or nothing at all as his popular predecessors had mostly come—through science, not as it is in 1930 but as it was in the wake of Huxley forty years ago, before the drift had set in strong towards specialization, when, he says in "Joan and Peter," "the story of life, of the origin and branching out of species, of the making of continents, was still the most inspiring of new romances." Though Wells was trained mainly in biology, that one science was enough to give him the scientific cast of mind. Not only has he been quick to make literary use of striking discoveries in other scientific fields, but he has taken the natural sciences with him into his criticisms of almost every phase of the existing social order and into his dreams of a new world. This scientific attitude sharply distinguishes him from those Victorian novelists

who equally concerned themselves with poverty, disease, and crime, but for the cure of which they had nothing to offer except political nostrums such as an extension of the elective franchise.

A common way with Wells in his more fantastic moods has been to begin with some scientific fact, theory, or surmise, not very well, if at all, known to the general public, and then to develop his theme through plausible inference. What at first lay in his mind as an abstraction comes out in a concrete pattern. His fantasies thus differ essentially from those of a Jules Verne, which may have suggested them, in that they have as their basis much more than a semblance of science. Their author has called them "scientific romances"—a phrase that only half describes them, since they usually have a sociological import, which in many instances appears to be the main purpose for which they were written. Thus "The Time Machine," which in the 'nineties set everybody talking about the fourth dimension, starts out with the idea that time is a dimen-

sion of space. A machine is built which takes the inventor into the future some 802,000 years and brings him safely back, after a good deal of shaking up, to tell what he saw. The thesis that Wells maintained in the face of Herbert Spencer's gospel that the human mind is destined to go on from light to light, was that, should the present sharp division between capital and labor continue, man would eventually differentiate into two species—a race of beautiful but ineffectual beings living in palaces on fruits and vegetables, and so without toil, and a race with "pale, chinless faces" dwelling in the caverns of the earth, and unable to see except in the dark like the owls. The Undergrounders, who are cannibals, invade by night the palaces of the Upper-grounders, and in course of time, I take it, eat them all up. At last the cannibals must fade away also and leave behind them a dead, silent world. Under the circumstances assumed, this would be the concluding scene in the conflict between capital and labor.

Growth, the physiologists were saying, is

intermittent. But suppose, Wells enquired, a food could be found that would make growth continuous? After many experiments a substance called "food of the gods" was discovered, which produced a race of giants, who looked with contempt upon the pygmies that remained and all their institutions. There was some trouble with the food, for it would dry into a powder and blow about and come within reach of animals for whom it was not intended. All creatures liked it. Chickens who ate it grew as big as horses and killed all the cats, wasps became a nuisance when they reached the size of barn owls, and nurseries had to be made over for children who shot up to the stature of Hercules when they were no more than six or eight years old. At last it became necessary to put a limit upon growth. Not from giants can come a better world.

Again, when astronomers were debating whether Mars is inhabited, Wells, taking the affirmative, brought a host of Martians in cylinders to the earth where they might be inspected. In the process of evolution as related

in "The War of the Worlds," the Martians have developed immense heads at the expense of the rest of the body, except the hands, which have not only survived but grown larger as the instruments of enormous brains. These strange visitors fall upon England with the intention of beginning there the extermination of the inferior race now existing on this planet. With their heat waves that set the Thames boiling, and their poison gas that kills all who breathe it, they strike terror into the opposing army. But just as victory appears in sight the Martians all suddenly topple over and die—victims of disease bacteria against which their systems can wage no war, for there are no bacteria in Mars. This is the end of the Superman.

Once more, all substances, so far as anybody now knows, are "transparent" to gravitation. And yet there may be, it is assumed in "The First Men in the Moon," a substance that will cut off the gravitational attraction of the sun or the earth just as we may "screen things by sheets of metal" from light or heat or elec-

trical waves. With sheets of this substance placed beneath guns or ironclads one might lift them as easily as we now lift a straw. In fact, a machine might be cleverly constructed that would take man anywhere through the universe. Without much difficulty a metal opaque to gravitation while transparent to the human eye is discovered, and a machine is built that conveys the inventor and a companion with terrific speed to the moon. Contrary to the opinion of astronomers, the moon is found to be inhabited, but by beings that burlesque rather than resemble humans, who live in the craters among moving artificial lights by night and come out during the day to bask in the sun. The inventor of the machine who made the trip in the interest of science, was slain by the Selenites, but the friend who accompanied him with a view to exploiting the mineral resources of the universe, contrived to return to the earth with two big bars of gold, but he lost his machine soon after landing in southern England. After all, the promoter must be content with what he can dig out of

the crust of the planetary fragment on which he has somehow been placed like the rest of us for a little while.

Social satire runs on a broader gauge in the later "Men Like Gods," which takes its cue from Einstein, according to whom, says Wells, the universe, which has hitherto been regarded as only extended, is "slightly bent and contorted, with other long unsuspected spatial dimensions." So it happens that two or three automobile parties, when near Maidenhead on the Thames, are rotated by way of the F dimension into a Utopia, such as the present world might become in the course of three thousand years would mankind but heed the teachings of experimental science. The Utopia that Wells depicts "has no parliament, no politics, no private wealth, no business competition, no police nor prisons, no lunatics, no defectives nor cripples." The capitalist and laborer as such have disappeared, so that there is no longer any idle class. Boys and girls learn in school what their capacities are and are directed in their vocations accordingly.

The motive behind all effort, physical or intellectual, has ceased to be personal aggrandizement; it is "the idea of creative service," which the remote ancestors of the Utopians learned of a martyred teacher, whom they follow but do not worship. The first sentence of their creed is not "I believe" but "I give myself."

The Utopians have gained complete control over themselves and external nature, becoming, as it were, like gods in physique and understanding. Assisted by climatic changes, they have long since discarded clothing that the human body may be exposed in all its beauty, except that one may now and then see a woman wearing a bracelet or necklace or girdle for ornament, or a man with a straw hat to protect his head from the violence of the sun at noonday, which no Utopia can tame. They all go mentally naked also; it would never occur to them to conceal the truth, or evade it by casuistry. There is no marriage, for vows or contracts are unknown to them; but births are strictly regulated by custom. All

harmful insects have been exterminated, such as the house fly, gnats and mosquitoes; and with them have gone all disease germs. Only the benevolent insects and germs have been allowed to survive. Hence there are no coughs, colds, or epidemics in Utopia. As harsh sounds are particularly disliked, the dog has been persuaded to give up his barking, and airplanes are built as swift and as noiseless as swallows in flight. Though the Utopians have retained a spoken language, they rarely utter sounds unless it be in verse and music, for they have learned to convey thought directly from mind to mind.

This is the general pattern of the Utopia which Wells has filled in variously in one book after another. When he compares his visions with the visions of Hebrew prophets, or Plato, or William Morris, he would imply that his are keyed more closely than were theirs to things as they are. There is growing up now, as it were, a science of the future, though it has not yet become so certain as the science that throws a searchlight on the past. Thus

the Utopia we have just looked into is a prolongation of the current trend in the fundamental medical sciences, with some assistance from physics and engineering and romance. As Wells now reads over his books, he is particularly pleased to see how much that has occurred in recent years for weal or for woe was clearly foretold by him in his "Anticipations," which appeared as far back as the opening of the present century. Naturally, the predictions that have come true interest him much more than those that have been contradicted by events.

He foresaw the war with Germany thirteen years in advance, and Germany's ultimate defeat. But as the war was so long a-coming, he thought in 1911 that England after all would give way to Germany without a conflict; and as late as July, 1914, it was Mr. Britling's opinion that Germany also did not want to fight, that her "militarism was a bluff." If you prophesy both for and against an event, it is a safe bet. On how the war would be fought if it came, Wells was correct in several strik-

ing details. The nations behind the lines would be organized for concerted action down to the last man and the last woman. His picture of the fear and flight of the people before an invading army was realized in Poland and elsewhere. He long foresaw poison gas and the scene when Germany would let it loose on the British in Flanders. He developed the armored train into the "tank" years before that idea had "penetrated to the military intelligence of any country." He did not think, however, that the tank would amount to much, for its wheels could be easily smashed by shells, and the monster would turn turtle, exposing the men to the fire of the enemy. His second sight thus failed to include the caterpillar tractor. The airplane, he thought, would come too late for use in the approaching war. He was sadly out, too, on the submarine. Still, taken in the mass, his "scientific" forecasts, worked out on the lines of "the probabilities of contemporary tendencies," have been very clever.

So to all who want to live in the future may

be commended Wells as more trustworthy than Kipling or any other of the modern prophets. This is not to say that he has no close rivals in a not very remote past. Shakespeare had a prophetic soul for the main chance of things. Leonardo da Vinci, four centuries ago, had in mind, they say, the airplane when he remarked "there shall be wings." Perhaps the most wonderful scientific guess on record is one by Swift, who, as is well known, had no interest in scientific investigation except to burlesque it as on a par with projects to extract sunbeams out of cucumbers, to be stored up in vials and to be let out in damp, inclement weather when the sun is behind a cloud. At a time when nobody knew that Mars had any satellites the astronomers in Laputa gave the planet two, apparently arguing that if the Earth has one moon and Jupiter four moons, Mars ought to have two. A century and a half later, a powerful telescope confirmed the inference.

Wells's prophecies culminate in a vision of a renovated world, not too far distant, which

he projects on the dark background of the world as it has been since man first came into it. The history of man has been a history of blunders. The science of society remains essentially where it has been for some thousands of years. Rarely has there been concerted action towards any definite end, except war, by any nation or people. True, Greece had Plato and Aristotle, but they were not heeded; the Western World has had Jesus of Nazareth, but his vision of a kingdom of heaven that should bring all mankind into peace, unity, and happiness, has been perverted into a metaphysical state and at last mostly forgotten or ignored in our creeds. To what heights man's mind may rise, when free from "miseries and insecurities," may be seen here and there in brief periods of comparative rest such as the Age of Pericles, when art and literature flourished in Greece as never before anywhere in the world, and the foundations of modern science were laid securely. But war between tribes and nations has been the rule. And there is always lurking somewhere in ambuscade the

military plunger—Alexander, Cæsar, Napoleon—waiting for a chance to upset the whole world.

Within the present generation things have been rather worse than usual, though there are signs of better times somewhere ahead. This is preëminently an Age of Confusion. The country into which Wells was born was at loose ends everywhere. England had inherited the social philosophy of Herbert Spencer, who would leave the individual man to go as he pleased, who taught that chaos, kept free from "the interference of any collective direction," would somehow work itself out into order through a process called evolution. Afterwards came the drift of the intelligentsia towards socialism. Wells joined the Fabian Society and traversed all the socialisms of the period, intrigued by the projects for a new world order, but he stepped aside as soon as he became convinced that the socialists were aiming at "the complete state control of Labour under a new plutocracy," which would be less efficient than the plutocracy then

existing. He balked before a Servile State, which was to be set up by means of a revolution. Here, too, lay concealed the sword.

For a time the dawn of a better world seemed to be breaking in Kipling's Empire, ushered in with wild clamor and "vehement gesticulation." Nobody dared question "the white man's burden," which became a creed. In an Empire proclaimed by a "spectacled and moustached little figure with its heavy chin," was a promise of what socalism could not offer—the fulfilment of a desire for "discipline and devotion and organized effort" in a close union of all peoples beneath the British flag, moving forward under the guardianship of England towards "a world peace and a world civilization." Everybody was to be happy; everybody was to be at ease. Literature and the arts were again to flourish as in ancient Greece. Disenchantment came with the advent of Joseph Chamberlain, a Birmingham ironmonger, who brought on the Boer war, who insulted France, Germany, and Russia, who sought to set off the British Empire

against the rest of the world by means of a preferential tariff for the benefit of England and Birmingham. Thus Kipling's Empire, which was a young man's dream of a Commonwealth of Nations serving one another, passed into "an adventure of exploitation." The drift of political thought was much the same in Germany and, though less prevailing, in France also. Under the name of imperialism, "a megalomaniac nationalism" became rampant throughout Western Europe. The clash came in 1914 and the entire structure of modern civilization collapsed on the loose sands.

The world must be built up anew. Ever since his youth Wells has been writing of the "New Republic," which, one of his characters remarks, has no connection with an "innocent American publication" by that name. As yet the minds and affairs of mankind have never been organized on a large scale for a great and worthy end. Rome and the Mediæval Church, with their misdirected aims, at last failed. There is no hope in modern democ-

racy, which is the rule of "the planless man," whose vision is cut off by the town pump in the middle distance. Nor have the proponents of the British Empire been able to see beyond a group of nations that fly the British flag; and the Solemn League and Covenant, which would bring in all nations, was "copied out of old history books." Social and political life, as it exists everywhere to-day, is "but a phase of immense dissolution." Out of the confusion of blunted aims and purposes, will there ever emerge a collective mind of the human species directed towards a world civilization, a world republic, with "the whole of mankind busy and happy, the races living in peace, each according to its aptitudes, a world going on—going on steady and swift to still better things"? Wells sees this good time slowly coming through the influence of science which is creating an aristocracy of intellect the world over.

Already science has penetrated into human affairs generally. It is undermining our traditional education from top to bottom, though

the process is greatly retarded by persisting ignorance of schoolmasters and public. The old logic and metaphysics, spun out of men's heads with little or no relation to reality, are fast going. Capitalism has had to submit to restraints; and even ministers of state sometimes seek the advice of men of science. And so on and so forth. In the end must go all the inherited "rubbish of the ancient world," kings and emperors, statesmen and lawyers, that man re-made may be free to develop what there is in him. There must be a new God. Not Matthew Arnold's "something, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness" or "any defective claptrap of that kind," which leaves righteousness in the air without definition. Not Kipling's "modernized Allah with a taste for engineering," whose activities are confined to the British Empire. Not "the anonymous God" of the agnostic, "a Veiled Being which seems to know nothing of life or death or good or ill." Nor the Absolute, that static Being, omnipotent and omniscient whom philosophers and theologians, indulging in superla-

tives, have created out of delusion and folly. But that Finite God re-discovered some years ago by the late William James: a Being within us, who lives and struggles along with us through time and space by which his power is limited, ruling our consciences and directing our aims—and, in a larger synthesis, summoning us to work and fight "for the unity and release and triumph of mankind."

Under the captaincy of this Finite God the New Republic dominating the world must eventually take visible form. The fusion of nations will of course be a gradual process, beginning with the most enlightened peoples. The movement may be initiated by Great Britain and the United States, between whom a common racial feeling is rather strong. Afterwards other white races will want to come in until there is a complete union of them all. A similar process will go on among the yellow races; and much later among the black races, where the development of "a collective mind" must be slower. But at last all colors will coalesce in a great "World State." Nowhere

along the way to unification is there to be any shedding of blood, for it is "an intellectual and educational evolution." This does not mean that there will be no stubborn obstacles to overcome. At the very beginning Great Britain will have to scrap her king and parliament, and likewise the United States her constitution with those nicely balanced powers that her politicians are always commending. Not for politicians or the privileged classes will the new State be organized, but for the people as a whole under the guidance of the highest intelligence. It is to be expected that there will be national prejudices everywhere to be "hammered down," and if there is to be but one language, as there must be, it will require a lot of very hard hammering to persuade people to give up the speech to which they have been accustomed from childhood for one best suited to all. Still, the will of "the collective mind," reinforced by the Finite God, must at last prevail. A natural centre of "The World Commonweal," as Wells now calls it, would be Paris, where might be kept

a card catalogue of the entire human species with thumb prints according to the Bertillon system for the identification of every man and woman on the earth.

It has been a pastime of English reviewers to bet on Wells's chances for a limited immortality as against Bennett and Galsworthy. Any book once admitted to the steel stacks of a modern fireproof library will last as long as the ink keeps black and the paper holds together; and there will always be somebody who will want to know what it is all about. Hence it behooves a writer who would live on to have an expert test the quality of the material that goes into the making of his book. The question concerning Wells is whether there will be in the year 2030 a body of readers large enough to warrant frequent reprints of his books such as exists in the year 1930 for Sterne and Fielding, who, though now well on in their second century, are still very much alive. Wells has tied the bulk of his work into the social and scientific speculations of the age. In the light of these ideas he has inter-

preted history and forecast the future. Thereby he has enlarged the view of innumerable readers who had looked but a little way before and after. He has taken them backward into the geologic ages to the origin of man and the origin of life and thence led them home through the records of man to the problems of the contemporary world. He would indeed have the minds of his readers embrace our universe from the first flare up of the sun on to its extinction some million million years hence, when its light, he tells them, will be turned off like a gas jet. Will Mr. Wells's ideas and dreams stir other generations as they have his own? Inevitably not. Most of his books were written for an immediate purpose which they have admirably served. In his phrase, they are "deliberately experimental"; and as such they must go the way of all experimental work where the artistic motive hardly enters. Already his "Modern Utopia," much of which he himself has repudiated, is very hard reading; whereas Plato's "Republic" is as readable as ever. Nor do any of his scien-

tific romances promise the continuing pleasure of Kipling's "With the Night Mail."

There remain the novels of contemporary life. "Art," says Wells, "that does not argue nor demonstrate nor discuss is merely the craftsman's impudence." The novel that aims only at a beautiful picture of the social scene by the selective process, taking this detail and omitting that, is, he repeats many times over, certain to pass. Henry James, for example, sought "to pick the straws out of the hair of Life" before he painted her, forgetting that "without the straws she is no longer the mad woman we love." If the novel is to mean anything, it must leave in all the straws; the characters must be no impersonal people, but people with political opinions, religious opinions, partisanships, lusts, and whims, which may be discussed, analyzed, and illuminated in unrestricted freedom. As proclaimed by Wells, the novel is a proper medium for canvassing all social and political problems as they arise. He professes not to teach but to point out, plead, and display. He would fill in, build

up, the collective mind. That is what he has used the novel for primarily.

When pursued to extremes, his method has led to the dissertation, treatise, essay, or sermon, with a certain amount of interesting narrative, sex, and general characterization to sustain discussion and argument. Thus "The Research Magnificent" is a running debate on traditional moral and political ideas, from the limitations of which man, following the light of science, should free himself in order that he may live gloriously as the uncrowned king of the world. "Marriage," with more story in it, deals with those most perplexing problems of sex for which there is no satisfactory solution in the present irrational organization of society; and for which there can be none until the world is made over in the way described in "The New Machiavelli," or in the later "Meanwhile." Similarly in "Joan and Peter" is set forth, with much else, a new system of education, "thorough, coherent, and lucid," in which the present motive of rivalry must give way to the spirit of coöperation if

mankind is ever to find salvation. To the same class of fiction belongs "Mr. Britling Sees It Through," which gives us the World War as it was reflected in the mind of the author when the future appeared dark and uncertain. All these novels are manipulated by groups of interlocutors, among whom is invariably Wells himself under another name, to play the leading rôle—at liberty also, when the discussion favors it, to jump in and out of the mind of any other of the disputants.

In "The World of William Clissold," it is "a cousin" or "distant relative" of the author who leads in the talk. With this man as mouthpiece, Wells re-states and re-examines most of the social questions that have troubled him in his previous novels and essays, coördinating one with another for a single picture of his mind. His approach is more historical than formerly, as should be expected of a man who has written a history of the universe. Thus the defalcation of William Clissold's father must be accompanied by an account of the rise of capitalism in order that the pro-

moter's conduct may be set in the proper light. Incidentally, the absurdities of English law must also be shown up, and there must be stinging paragraphs on the fallacies of socialism as represented by Fourier and Marx, whom Wells has left behind. Likewise a complete understanding of William Clissold's dealings with women requires not only a history of the institution of marriage, but back of that some observations on the sexual behavior of anthropoid apes. As one of the interlocutors remarks, the author brings in "everything in earth and whatever used to be in heaven," ending at last with sex in its biological aspects.

Piquancy is given to the narrative by little Menippean satires, varied by neat eulogies, on his contemporaries, from an "uninteresting" King all the way downward. Nothing, however, approaches in violence the unwarranted attack on Henry James a decade ago in "Boon." Ramsay MacDonald is described as a "queer, vain simulacrum of a statesman." Dean Inge, whom Clissold met at a dinner

party, Wells likes rather well. "I found him," he says, "all that I had hoped to find him—liberal Anglicanism incarnate, lean, erect and —a little discoloured." There is also a pleasant encounter between Clissold and Dr. Jung, the psychoanalyst, who talk about Wells's idea of God as "a sort of super-mind of the species," running backward in their conversation to certain analogies in ancient cults.

It does not appear that Wells has greatly altered his opinions in recent years beyond details, though he now sometimes looks at things from a different point of view. The New Republic, re-named "The World Commonweal," is still in the forefront of his mind. Just now he throws the emphasis on the influence of world-wide commerce and world-wide industrial corporations in bringing about the international mind. His dream is not so much of a World State with a central capital (which is probably "impracticable") as of "a world business organization," directing, in close alliance with science, all the affairs of mankind, including "the education and the

biological life," as well as the "economic policy," of the immense community. He is not so bitter as once against the League of Nations, for, though the machinery devised by an American schoolmaster must go, anyone who visits Geneva may detect there something resembling "a cosmopolitan mentality" among the permanent officials of that body. A similar discovery has been made in a study of the Treaty of Locarno. Altogether the outlook for a World Directorate is rather promising in 1930.

Without characters, without dramatic quality, fiction of this kind is dependent for its vitality upon the lasting worth of the author's ideas. Rousseau's "Emile," which is a treatise on education with the merest streak of a story, is still read. What fate awaits Wells's ideas, which, despite their wide range, are fundamentally educational also, we shall never know. They would, I daresay, stand a better chance of direct survival and influence had he occasionally cultivated that precision of style and statement characteristic of the

great masters. He may see things through but he does not take time to think them through. "I would rather be called," he wrote to Henry James, "a journalist than an artist." Voluble in a voluble age, his ideas seem destined to be dispersed and to reappear in the greater art of others.

Lying in the background is, at it were, another Wells, who may at any time step to the front. Not the sophisticated Wells with a mission, but the counter-jumper who remembers the days when he dressed the windows of a draper's shop and passed his holidays on a bicycle. The novels reminiscent of that period and the experiences of the young man during his first years in London give us the real Wells before the world had become for him an addled egg which he must try desperately hard, he has said, to incubate. Essentially, in his ways of thinking, violently anti-Victorian, he paid his compliments to the virtuous Queen and all she is supposed to stand for long before the advent of Lytton Strachey. But when it comes to "the novel proper," as he

calls it, he is thoroughly Victorian. He still holds that the right way was discovered by Dickens, whose primary aim was discursive characterization, not story nor drama narrowly conceived. So it has been with Wells in a series of novels where he has kept his mind closely upon his characters, letting the story unfold about them and not very inquisitive about their destiny. His usual manner here is to concentrate attention on the proceedings of a single character dominating a small group, though it sometimes happens that a secondary character intrudes to upset the centre of gravity. Thus without any carefully worked out design, the characters are let loose to go whither they will. The outcome has been several delightful "studies in personalities" in novels beginning as early as 1896 with "The Wheels of Chance" and including in order, "Love and Mr. Lewisham," "Kipps," "Tono-Bungay," "Ann Veronica," "The History of Mr. Polly," and the afterglows, "Bealby" and "Christina Alberta's Father."

Not that the motive of propaganda is ever

absent. But except for passages thrown in now and then, it is less apparent here than elsewhere. Were the social and industrial world organized as Wells would have it, nothing that he relates in these novels could possibly have happened. All the personalities depicted in them are, in his phrase, "thwarted and crippled by the defects of our contemporary civilization." Had they enjoyed the knowledge and freedom of one of his Utopias, they would have worked out their lives quite differently. They would not have remained blunted or dwarfed. Mr. Lewisham, the schoolmaster, and Mr. Preemby, the house-agent's clerk, who is made to believe that he is the father of Christina Alberta, are both tricked by artful women into a marriage net from which they are unable to break away. Ann Veronica and Christina Alberta, those emancipated young women who would have their own careers, find themselves up against "the whole order of things"; they come through after a fashion but badly damaged. Bealby, the spirited blue-eyed boy who fights

hard against going into service, is forced to succumb at last and accept the place that caste has fixed for him. In the last sight we have of Hoopdriver in "The Wheels of Chance" he is still "a cad on castors" running along behind the counters of a drapery emporium. Kipps, who started out in a similar establishment, never gets beyond the ownership of a bookshop. Mr. Polly, who set his outfitter's shop on fire to get the insurance and so escape bankruptcy, ends up as helper to a fat woman who keeps an inn. "The History of Mr. Polly" its author regards as his "happiest book" and the one he cares for most. The glory of the series is nevertheless "Tono-Bungay," where, reversing the process, Wells tells how a shrewd little bounder with glasses, named Ponderevo, swindles the public out of some millions of pounds with his patent medicines and worthless stocks in bogus trading companies, to be detected in his frauds at last and to die in a whine. In failure or in success the modern world is shown to be a world of waste from the cradle to the grave.

Most of these personalities are odd and peculiar, like the characters in Dickens. They wear, as it were, tags for identification. Miss Heydinger, when disturbed out of the reveries with which she is afflicted, pats her hair vehemently. Mr. Ponderevo has the habit of drawing air in through his teeth when speaking so that the sound is reduced to a soft confidential whisper; and so flexible are his knees that when he walks his short legs show no stride but seem to twinkle. Kipps, the coiner of absurd cryptic phrases, has an "upside down way of talking"; and when nonplussed falls back on "That's jest it." Anywhere may appear the ghost of Mr. Micawber or Mr. Alfred Jingle.

The simple souls among them develop as they go along redundant imaginations. Some of them had acquired an inferiority complex years before amateur psychologists had picked up the phrase. That is, feeling the insufficiencies of the humdrum life that enmeshes them, the poor devils try to escape by dreaming that they are somebody else or by building up air

castles in which they live lives that have color and adventure. Kipps, so long as the money lasts, has his whiskey and soda like a gentleman. Ponderevo moves from a chemist's shop on Main Street to the mansion of a promoter and swindler. Polly, who burns his shop down, becomes by a fluke of fortune, a momentary hero. Hoopdriver tells the young lady in gray that he is an artist, born on a South African ostrich farm, where he once killed a lion. There is little psychological analysis. The humor lies in the story of what is going on in the minds of shopkeepers and in the projection of fantastic dreams in absurd and incongruous acts. Fraud and arson cease to be crimes in becoming humorous. In this kind of characterization Wells has had no equal since Dickens died.

Once, in a mood of self-criticism, Wells appears to turn against himself and his projects. It is in the later history of Mr. Preemby, who is convinced by a ouija board that he is a reincarnation of Sargon, King of Kings, who has returned to the earth to save the world.

The end for the twentieth-century Sargon is madness and death. With his martyrdom ends the project to make over mankind into a New Republic. The world still goes on its own way, unregardful of the new Sargon out of Babylonia.

It may well be that the Wells who will live longest is the man who wrote most like the Victorians. Such is the irony of Fate.

# READING LIST

# READING LIST

## BRITISH

The liveliest comment on contemporary fiction is by E. M. Forster in *Aspects of the Novel.* New York, Harcourt, Brace, 1927.

This book should be supplemented by the illuminating exposition and criticism in the concluding chapters of *A History of English Literature,* by Emile Legouis and Louis Cazamian. New York, Macmillan, 1930.

Excellent also is *The Modern English Novel,* by Abel Chevally. English translation, New York, Knopf, 1925.

The relation of contemporary fiction, British and American, to the Victorian era is briefly stated by W. L. Cross in *The Modern English Novel.* New Haven, Yale University Press, 1928.

ARNOLD BENNETT. Six of his novels may well be read in the following order: *Buried Alive; The Old Wives' Tale; Clayhanger; Hilda Lessways; These Twain;* and *Riceyman Steps.*

A good brief account of Bennett's work is given by L. G. Johnson in *Arnold Bennett of The Five Towns.* London, Daniel.

JOSEPH CONRAD. The way to read Conrad is to begin with *Youth* and then to go on with *The Nigger of the Narcissus; Typhoon; Heart of Darkness; Karain; The Secret Sharer; Freya of the Seven Isles; The End of the Tether; Nostromo;* and *Lord Jim.*

For Conrad on his art, read his *Notes on Life and Letters; Last Essays;* and his prefaces to the various volumes in the Concord Edition of his *Works.* New York, Doubleday, Doran.

Consult G. Jean-Aubry, *Joseph Conrad, Life and Letters;* Edward Garnett, *Letters from Joseph Conrad;* and Richard Curle, *Conrad to a Friend,* being a collection of letters.

JOHN GALSWORTHY. Besides *The Forsyte Saga,* which concludes with *On Forsyte Change* (1930), should be read some of Galsworthy's other novels and short stories like *The Patrician* and several of his plays, especially *Loyalties.*

For his art read *Castles in Spain and other Screeds;* and his prefaces and literary essays in the Manaton Edition of his *Works.* New York, Scribners.

The most comprehensive account of his works is by Leon Schalit entitled *John Galsworthy, A Survey.* New York, Scribners.

HERBERT GEORGE WELLS. His three most

humorous novels are *Kipps; Tono-Bungay;* and *The History of Mr. Polly.* Second to them are *Love and Mr. Lewisham; Ann Veronica;* and *Christina Alberta's Father.* A good example of his "scientific romances" is *The Time Machine.* His Utopia, briefly given in *Men Like Gods,* has been expanded in many novels and essays. Among his novels dealing largely with social and political questions are *Mr. Britling Sees it Through,* one of the best war novels of the period; *The World of William Clissold; Meanwhile;* and *The Autocracy of Mr. Parham* (1930).

The "essential ideas" that have governed Wells's life are briefly stated in *The Open Conspiracy* (1928). His views on the novelist's art are summarized in "A General Introduction" to the Atlantic Edition of his *Works* and in an essay in this edition entitled "The Contemporary Novel." New York, Scribners.

For the entire range of his works, consult Georges Connes, *A Dictionary of the Characters and Scenes in the Novels, Romances, and Short Stories of H. G. Wells.* Paris, 1925.

---

MAX BEERBOHM. *Zuleika Dobson.* For his burlesque parodies of contemporary novelists, see *A Christmas Garland.*

## READING LIST

JOHN DAVYS BERESFORD. *The History of Jacob Stahl.*

GEORGE DOUGLAS BROWN. *The House with the Green Shutters.*

SAMUEL BUTLER. *The Way of All Flesh.* This novel has had great influence upon the fiction of the last decade.

GILBERT CANNAN. *Three Sons and a Mother.*

CLEMENCE DANE. *Legend;* and *The Babyons.*

WALTER DE LA MARE. *The Memoirs of a Midget.*

WALTER LIONEL GEORGE. *The Confessions of Ursula Trent.*

WILLIAM HENRY HUDSON. *Green Mansions,* with an introduction by John Galsworthy.

ALDOUS LEONARD HUXLEY. *Crome Yellow;* and *Antic Hay.*

JAMES JOYCE. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.*

SHEILA KAYE-SMITH. *Joanna Godden.*

RUDYARD KIPLING. *Kim;* and *Selected Stories from Kipling,* edited by W. L. Phelps. New York, Doubleday, Doran.

DAVID HERBERT LAWRENCE. *The Lost Girl;* and *Women in Love.*

WYNDHAM LEWIS. *Tarr.*

ROSE MACAULAY. *Potterism;* and *Daisy and Daphne.*

## READING LIST

COMPTON MACKENZIE. *Sinister Street.*

WILLIAM SOMERSET MAUGHAM. *Of Human Bondage;* and *The Moon and Sixpence.*

LEONARD MERRICK. *Conrad in Quest of His Youth;* and *The Man Who Understood Women, and Other Stories.*

CHARLES EDWARD MONTAGUE. *Disenchantment;* and *Right off the Map.*

EDWARD MORGAN FORSTER. *A Passage to India.*

DOROTHY RICHARDSON. A series of novels under the general title of *Pilgrimage,* beginning with *Pointed Roofs,* with an introduction by May Sinclair.

ETHEL SIDGWICK. *Promise;* and *Succession.*

MAY SINCLAIR. *Mary Olivier;* and *Mr. Waddington of Wyck.*

GERTRUDE STEIN. *The Making of Americans; being the History of a Family's Progress.* Listed here for its strange perversity of style.

FRANK SWINNERTON. *Nocturne.*

H. M. TOMLINSON. *Gallions Reach;* and *All Our Yesterdays.*

HUGH WALPOLE. *The Cathedral; The Green Mirror; The Duchess of Wrexe;* and *Hans Frost.* For a critical appreciation of Walpole, see Clemence Dane, *Tradition and Hugh Walpole.* New York, Doubleday, Doran, 1929.

REBECCA WEST. *The Judge.*

VIRGINIA WOOLF. *Mrs. Dalloway; To the Lighthouse;* and *Orlando.*

FRANCIS BRETT YOUNG. *Deep Sea;* and *The Black Diamond.*

## AMERICAN

For contemporary American fiction, may be read the two following handbooks:

CARL VAN DOREN. *Contemporary American Novelists.* New York, Macmillan, 1922.
The best survey of American fiction from 1900 to 1920.

REGIS MICHAUD. *The American Novel To-day.* Boston, Little, Brown, 1928.
The most complete study of the American novelists of the last decade.

---

SHERWOOD ANDERSON. *Winesburg, Ohio; Poor White; The Triumph of the Egg;* and *Dark Laughter.*

JAMES BRANCH CABELL. *The Cream of the Jest;* and *Jurgen.*

WILLA CATHER. *My Antonia; A Lost Lady;* and *Death Comes for the Archbishop.*

FLOYD DELL. *Moon-Calf;* and *The Briary-Bush.*

## READING LIST

JOHN DOS PASSOS. *Three Soldiers; Manhattan Transfer;* and *The 42nd Parallel.*

THEODORE DREISER. *An American Tragedy.*

JOHN ERSKINE. *Helen of Troy.*

EDNA FERBER. *The Girls;* and *So Big.*

DOROTHY CANFIELD FISHER. *The Brimming Cup.*

WALDO DAVID FRANK. *City Block;* and *Holiday.*

ZONA GALE. *Miss Lulu Bett;* and *Faint Perfume.*

ELLEN GLASGOW. *The Miller of Old Church;* and *Virginia.*

HENRY SYDNOR HARRISON. *Queed;* and *V. V.'s Eyes.*

ERNEST HEMINGWAY. *A Farewell to Arms.*

JOSEPH HERGESHEIMER. *The Three Black Pennys; Java Head; Linda Condon;* and *Cytherea.*

ROBERT HERRICK. *The Common Lot;* and *Together.*

HENRY JAMES. Representative of his novels that have had greatest influence during the last two decades are *The Awkward Age;* and *The Ambassadors.* His attitude towards the novelists just before the World War is given at large in "The New Novel" (1914) in *Notes on Novelists and Some Other Notes.* New York, Scribners.

## READING LIST

OLIVER LA FARGE. *Laughing Boy.*

SINCLAIR LEWIS. *Main Street; Babbitt; Arrowsmith;* and *Dodsworth.*

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY. *Thunder on the Left.*

CHARLES GILMAN NORRIS. *Brass.*

ELIZABETH MADOX ROBERTS. *The Time of Man;* and *The Great Meadow.*

ANNE DOUGLAS SEDGWICK. *Tante;* and *The Little French Girl.*

UPTON SINCLAIR *The Jungle.*

BOOTH TARKINGTON. *The Magnificent Ambersons;* and *Alice Adams.*

EDITH WHARTON. *The House of Mirth; Ethan Frome; The Age of Innocence;* and *Hudson River Bracketed.* For essays on the novelist's art, see her *The Writing of Fiction.* New York, Scribners.

THORNTON WILDER. *The Bridge of San Luis Rey;* and *The Woman of Andros.*

OWEN WISTER. *The Virginian;* and *Lady Baltimore.*

COLLEGE OF MARIN
3 2555 00121519 8